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*QUAKERS IN THE MODERN WORLD*



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*Quakers*  
IN THE  
*MODERN WORLD*



By William Wistar Comfort

President Emeritus of Haverford College

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## *Foreword*

MY DEAR FRIEND:

Like others of my acquaintance, you have from time to time asked me questions about the faith of the Quakers and what has made them the way they are. There are in existence thousands of books by and about members of this small group of Christians now three hundred years old, but few of these books are easily accessible to the casual inquirer, and very few of these cover the whole field of your inquiry. Some of them are purely historical, some are doctrinal, and many are biographical and thus limited to the religious experience of a single individual.

It seems to me that a small book of a popular nature which should observe a strictly proportional treatment might be of use to you and other inquirers at this time when so many intelligent but unsatisfied Christians are looking about them for a communion which will satisfy their intellectual and spiritual requirements. Such a book should point out what Quakerism offers in a distraught world—what are the historical essentials of the Quaker faith, what is the theory of Quaker worship, and what the testimonies of Quakerism are as applied in the family, in civil life, and in the widening international relations which are now thrust upon us.

While answering your queries, I may render a small service to the Society of Friends itself. For the Quakers

of today, while better known than ever before, are far from measuring up to the beauty of their profession. They are no longer an exclusive group composed of "peculiar people." If you should be interested by what you read to see for yourself what the Society of Friends is like, it is now possible through means herein set forth to associate in their worship and join in their works.

This volume contains some of the ideas I expressed in two earlier books, *Quaker Trends for Modern Friends* and *Just Among Friends*.

Haverford, Pa.

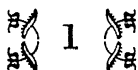
W. W. COMFORT

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*"As Doves Without Their Mates"*

This is not an age of faith in the power of unseen forces making for righteousness—faith in what men call God. When they discuss serious matters at all, men prefer to be what they call "realistic." That is, they limit their confidence to what they can see. They trust other men only so far as they can watch them, and they trust God not at all in the direction of mundane affairs. They have reached the conclusion that though God may be in his heaven, all is wrong with the world. The law of many people today is a thinly veiled version of the rule of tooth and claw, the survival of the strongest.

How has this state of mind been reached, and why are so many good people so disillusioned that they now make no response to spiritual appeals? Such people are still kind and generous. They subscribe to community chests, buy Christmas seals, contribute to aid the Chinese blind, the French war orphans and the Red Cross with the same ready generosity that they show in buying war bonds to blast other people into broken bits. Much of this generosity is the result of propaganda and of mass psychology, but not all of it. Some of it is explained only by that genuine altruism and self-sacrifice which centuries of Christianity have bred, but for which Christianity now gets scant recognition. There were already some people two hundred and fifty years ago who, like Molière's Don Juan, boasted that they gave

alms not for the love of God, but "for the love of humanity." Such people were called "libertins," free thinkers, in those days and they ran some risk of being jailed by the authorities. Now many of them are *called* Christians, but they are active only on a human level and pay only lip-service to a God whom no man hath seen at any time. Again, why has Christianity been watered down for so many intelligent people to a thin humanitarianism which is running under its own steam? I think we must try to answer this question before inquiring what Quakerism has to offer to disillusioned humanity. We shall then be in a better position to see, in spite of many other worthy attempts to satisfy spiritual craving, how Quakerism comes in.

In seeking to give reasons for the lack of faith in our world today, different people would offer different explanations. I am willing to suggest four reasons which go far to account for discouragement, disillusion and spiritual indifference.

The first of these is the domination of much of our modern thought by the natural sciences. This domination began soon after the middle of the last century. Based on the certainties of mathematics, physics, astronomy, chemistry and biology, a deterministic philosophy captured the western world. The best minds were to be found in the laboratory and the observatory, observing and recording facts which led to immutable laws and which explained so much that had perplexed humanity. Some believed that the laboratory would reveal the seat of intelligence, of the will, even of the soul of man. Great was the hope and confidence that man could fulfil his destiny unaided. "Revealed religion" was brushed off. Faith in any power not recorded in the

laboratory seemed fantastic to men who trusted all to science. And indeed, the accomplishments of these men in science applied to living have been breathtaking. None of us can, or wishes to, escape the effect of appliances which save us so much time, effort and wear and tear. The only misfortune is that too much has been expected of science. It had accomplished so much that we were ready to expect all. From this expectation some have recovered and are now disillusioned. Others still live in expectation that science will satisfy the deepest demands of mankind. No concern need be felt for these latter: as yet, they find in science all the nourishment they require. But those who are already disillusioned arouse our sympathy. They are like people who expected the telegraph to bring about a good understanding among the nations, or who have tried in vain to heal a broken heart by turning on the radio. After trying all the physical remedies in the medicine chest for their spiritual longings, they are disappointed and sometimes cynical. They say, "Well, after all, we appear to be about where we were before." And they are. They begin to realize, however, that as there is a physical body with its requirements, so also there is a spiritual body with entirely different requirements. They must make the medicine fit the need. If they knew where to find spiritual remedies for their spiritual needs, they would take courage.

A second group of people who now find their faith undermined are those who are appalled and stunned by the triumph of the forces which have been let loose in the two world conflicts. Their despair is summed up in the question one so often hears: "How can God allow this terrible war to continue?" To that question there is

of course no answer, for the simple reason that God has nothing to do with this war or any other. It is a mediæval, a puerile conception of God that imagines Him sitting upon a cloud, like the Greek gods at the siege of Troy, watching man destroying his fellow-men by ever improved methods of destruction. Yet there is no doubt that this conception is widely held by pious folk who are troubled because their repeated prayers in church and in private, that God will end war, are apparently unheeded.

So far as actual war is concerned, we shall have it with us just so long as we choose to have it. God allows man to play with these deadly weapons and lethal gases as long as man pleases to do so. It is a ghastly game, and it is getting worse. But it is an old game, and so long as modern man continues to be beguiled by the argument that justice is secured by armed might and that peace is insured by preparation for war, so long we shall have wars. But we don't *have* to have them. As soon as men give to peace one quarter of the skillful consideration they now apply to war, they will be on the road to lasting peace. The more serious concern of this second group, however, is not with mere war. It is deeper than that. It is the belief, visibly demonstrated in war, that *Might makes Right*, that the concentrated application of every form of evil will in itself produce justice. The painful thought here is that our most profound moral conceptions of right and wrong are thus at the mercy of physical forces, are hazarded upon the relative merits of tanks, shells and planes. For him who stops to reflect upon these things, it seems as though the very moral underpinnings of his life were knocked out. For himself, he marvels how so many of his excellent friends can fail

to see any inconsistency between their profession and their lives, and how they continue to live (or die) in a sacrifice of eternal principles to temporary expediency. This dilemma, too, will produce some anxious mourners.

A third group of persons includes those who have been unconsciously affected by the passing of the belief in heaven and hell as definite places of reward and punishment. Through the Middle Ages Christians held to this belief. But with the Renaissance, some began to take a chance regarding it. To the scholar and scientist of the Renaissance, man's life seemed more interesting than it had seemed for over a thousand years; to the artist this world seemed more beautiful than it had seemed since the height of Greek civilization. So men's minds came to be filled with the satisfaction offered by the wonderful world about them, and many ceased to worry about an indefinite future in some other sphere. *Carpe diem* was and is the motto of such who seem incapable of otherworldliness, who apparently feel no need of an Infinite to which to refer the finite.

Attention is called from time to time to the inadequacy of this humanistic philosophy, as it finds lodgment in less capacious minds. The need for more religion among our people is frequently expressed. What is meant is that we need in America the revival of a valid motive for righteousness. We can no longer be called a God-fearing people. Carnegie medals, Bok awards and the like secular encouragements of virtue do not seem to get to the root of our national lawlessness and immorality. We take our ideals rather from Hollywood than from the Holy Land. We have become opportunists, seeking our heaven and hell in the economic and social satisfactions or disappointments of this life. Is it

possible that our national morality is seriously undermined by the short views we take?

The danger of the situation was well expressed in an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* for November 3, 1906. After disclaiming any intention to take part for or against any particular creed, the author states that if there has been a marked decline in religious faith, that fact has a wide effect even upon the markets and the value of things that are bought and sold. He says, "he who believes in a future life is a citizen of two worlds. He moves in this, but his highest thought and inspiration are fixed in the future." He thus has an entirely different focus, for "he looks upon his life here as but a preparation for the life to come." The editorial closes on a note which, though serious, is not more apprehensive than the occasion warrants regarding the country's future:

"There is no one who would not prefer to do business with a person who really believes in a future life. If there are fewer men of such faith in the world, it makes a big difference; and if faith is to continue to decline, this will require new adjustments. There are certainly, on the surface, many signs of such a decline. Perhaps, if it were possible to probe deeply into the subject, it might be found that faith still abounded, but it is no longer expressed in the old way. But we are obliged to accept the surface indications. These include a falling off in church attendance, the abandonment of family worship, the giving over of Sunday, more and more, to pleasure and labor, the separation of religious from secular education under the stern demands of nonsectarianism, the growing up of a generation uninstructed as our fathers were in the study of the Bible, the secularization of a portion of the Church itself, and its inability in a large

way to gain the confidence of the laboring people. If these are really signs of a decay of religious faith, then, indeed, there is no more important problem before us than that of either discovering some adequate substitute for faith, or to take immediate steps to check a development that has within it the seeds of a national disaster.”<sup>1</sup>

The belief in the survival of the spirit after death is such an intrinsic feature of most religious faiths that we may share the concern of the editorial just quoted. The individual who has placed his treasure in the earthen vessels of man's notions runs the risk of losing sight of any other higher point of reference. When a man asks “What difference does it make? Who cares what I do?” he is no longer a responsible member of society. He is a lone wolf and is seldom happy.

The fourth group of those who have lost their faith, if they ever had one, consists of the frank pleasure-seekers. They are those who, largely from ignorance and thoughtlessness, have consistently mistaken fun for happiness, a good time for contentment. Occasionally these two categories overlap, but they are not identical. Usually they can be distinguished by a simple test: fun and a good time are bought and sold at current prices; happiness and contentment are never for sale. Again, fun and a good time endure for only a short time and are subject to quick vacillations; happiness and contentment are a state of mind, and in some fortunate individuals last for years without serious fluctuation. Of course, it was discovered a long time ago that a man's happiness does not consist in his ability to gratify every whim and selfish desire. Yet, there are individuals all about us who pathetically continue to seek their satisfaction in the accumulation of money for selfish purposes and who envy

<sup>1</sup> By permission of the *Wall Street Journal*.

those who have the necessary "dough" to do what they please. As applied to such persons, the language of *Isaiah* is still pertinent: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?"

By a noteworthy compensation in the moral field, those who most persistently seek to gratify their own tastes, without consideration for others, are most often dissatisfied and unhappy. A physician with a large practice among the wealthy once testified that he had never known any very wealthy patient who was happy. We thus see exemplified all about us in life the truth which is so often illustrated in the parables of Jesus. The trouble is, of course, that such people are fighting against the stars in their courses, against forces which can't be beaten and which will throw them every time for a loss. There come times when the heart is not satisfied with the mansions bought with earthly treasures.

Now, when a confirmed pleasure-seeker comes to see the folly of his philosophy by tasting the ashes following upon self-gratification, he is likely to swell the number of those who have lost their faith. The pleasure-seekers held a pretty cheap and shoddy faith to begin with, but after all it was something by which they directed their lives. Now, having been disabused of any permanent satisfaction attached to having a good time in life, they think there is nothing left for them. They have lost their old faith, such as it was, and have had no experience with any other. What they need, and what the more intelligent among them are seeking, is a new kind of unselfish interest which will fill their life and make it again worth living. They need to be introduced to a life on a new and altruistic plane.



There, if I am not mistaken, we have the sources of much of the unbelief which marks our present American life. There may be other sources, but we have enough to furnish a considerable quota of seekers for something more satisfying than they have hitherto known. For in all these groups which we have considered as worshipping false gods, or shown to be prostrated in disillusion, there are individuals who are ready to embrace a faith which meets their present needs.

Among them are to be found many who have ceased to be touched by the formal services of the contemporary churches. They are unable to join longer in confessing a creed which seems to them perilously over-confident in its detailed assertions; they have wearied of the sermons of one man for weeks or months at a time; the expensive and highly trained choirs no longer seem to bring the spiritual message they once wafted to the soul; the prominence of the money factor and the control exerted in some churches by wealthy parishioners seems out of place in a house of worship; to some the continuous address of man to God in the hour of fixed worship, with no silence provided when God might speak to man, is a source of grave concern. Thus there are people who are surfeited with church services as they are now carried on, and who stay away from church rather than be longer exposed to them.

In what has just been said, there is no desire to condemn the churches. Rather must all Christians, of whatever communion, feel that they have all come short of their calling and that there is not one of them that is perfect, no not one. It is unfortunately simply stating a fact to say that there are not a few members who have ceased attendance at their churches because of dissatis-

faction with the form of service. They turn out for baptisms, weddings and funerals. But the usual service is too vicarious, they feel left out. What they want is to feel that they have a part to take, a work to do, and that someone cares what happens to them. They want to get nearer to the source of warmth and love, and feel the Spirit working in themselves instead of hearing or reading about it working in others nineteen centuries ago. They covet the *sensation* of God rather than the mere *knowledge* of Him. Such people might welcome an opportunity in the silence to be on the receiving end of the marvelous network with which we can attune our hearts, and through which we can receive instructions how to find and take the part assigned to us in the divine plan. We would like to walk and talk with God, so as to be conscious of approval and support in all we undertake.

In all this the primary concern is not, I think, to avoid an eternity of punishment and win an eternity of bliss. While some, as said before, have ceased to believe at all in heaven and hell, there are probably more who hesitate to declare confidence in the circumstances attached to the enjoyment of eternal life. For many that must remain the great enigma. But of one thing such persons are certain: they wish so to live in this world that their spirits may deserve survival; they wish to develop *here* a spirit so pure, so clean, so true and just that it will naturally belong in the category of those qualities which survive *there*. They would like to feel now the divine nature within them. Unable to speak confidently of where, when and how the great translation from time to eternity takes place, they find in Whittier's hymn of *The Eternal Goodness* the expression of a sufficient faith. The elaborate other-world landscapes which imaginative ar-

tists portrayed for centuries are now museum pieces. Only the most childish mind can give them place today. But for us moderns no words express more acceptably than Whittier's a minimum faith to which we can cling:

I know not what the future hath  
Of marvel or surprise,  
Assured alone that life and death  
His mercy underlies.

. . . . .  
I know not where his islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond his love and care.

If we know that much, we have a motive for a righteous life.

## *The Beginnings of Quakerism*

The Quakerism of today has deep roots in the past. It cannot be understood without some knowledge of the last three hundred years. William James made familiar the term "varieties of religious experience," and he recognized Quakerism as one of these varieties. The Society of Friends has a well-documented history, in the course of which it is easy to trace the victories and the defeats of those who strove to live in harmony with the Light Within them.

Religious movements all pass through a period of enthusiasm, of intense missionary zeal, when the pristine inspiration is still fresh in those who first felt that they had caught a new glimpse of spiritual reality and had done battle against the spirit of this world. These movements are prone, however, to pass into the hands of men who have come down from the spiritual battlements and who live contentedly on the acquisitions for which their predecessors fought and died. The death of many promising religious movements has followed the death of their early leaders. The Society of Friends might have died too, but it didn't. Though the human weakness and unfaithfulness of its members have failed to illustrate it with full effect, yet neither political, industrial nor social revolutions have altogether obscured its message. The story of its rise and spread, of its errors and victories, has often been told. But one cannot understand Quakerism

as it is today without a brief introduction to the Quakerism of the past.

It has been observed that "each Church is an attempt to translate Christianity into a working formula"<sup>1</sup> We are to consider now the establishment of a religious Society of people who tried to do just this, who came to feel the same way about the relation of religion to life, of faith to works. They were sure that the way they felt was in accordance with Truth, with the Light, with God's will revealed to them. They thus called themselves Children or Friends of this Light, of this Truth. Their concern was not with the elements of theology, for those were at that time settled; nor was it with elaborate religious rites and symbolic ceremonies, for they deemed them unnecessary. They were removed as far as possible from being sacerdotalists. We are dealing not with a *Church* in the ordinary sense, but with a *Society*, which came to have many vital cells or "chapters" here and there, and formed a beloved community of brothers and sisters.

Such a community of individuals who sought to know the will of God directly and personally, without the intermediation of any titular hierarchy of anointed clergy, was not a new thing in Christian countries. The Albigenses, the Waldenses, and later the Collegiants of Holland, the Familists, Schwenkfelders, Mennonites and other Continental groups had all anticipated the Friends of England in their search for a simple faith and a godly way of life, free from the trammels of man-made conventions. They were heretics, in accordance with contemporary standards, for they were nonconformists with the liturgical and sacerdotal requirements of the great con-

<sup>1</sup> Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century*, p. 302.

temporary communions. They formed an invisible Church, whose shrine was the individual heart where they met and worshiped God personally. In varying degrees they were thus mystics, and their history is part of the long history of mystical movements in religion.

So far as one can see, there is nothing original in the thought of ancient Friends. But the organization of Quakerism is original. That organization, together with early missionary zeal and a later close social *esprit de corps*, saved Quakerism, whereas many of these other reforming groups, with their literature, have passed under devastating persecution into oblivion. The persecution of Friends in England for nearly fifty years was indeed ruthless also, but there the intensity of the hostility of Church and State was mitigated at times by circumstances and by vacillating policy. The brief breathing-spells thus afforded gave the heroic defenders of Quakerism a chance to reform their ranks and maintain their position, until the Toleration Act of 1689 under William and Mary closed the period of Quaker martyrdom.

We may note first, then, that the Society of Friends is one of many historical groups that have sought, in freedom from forms, for the simplicity, sincerity and innocence of primitive Christianity. Substituting personal experience for vicarious religious worship and for the exacting creeds devised by man, the primary feature of Quakerism is obedience to the Inner Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (*John*, I), and to the Inner Voice which speaks to every man that makes use of the free grace to hear and obey it. Organized religion of course was not inclined to tolerate the independent worship of those who neglected or disparaged the opportunities for worship afforded by the Establishment.

All through the vicissitudes in the contemporary national evolution lived George Fox (1624–1691), the son of modest but substantial parents in rural Leicestershire. Variouslly employed in shoemaking and in tending sheep in early youth, he grew up a godly lad, developing a powerful physique and seeking for a spiritual peace which he found not in the cathedrals, churches and chapels to which he later had resort. There were many like him. Of all the divers sects which flourished in England during the first half of the seventeenth century, it is the unorganized Seekers who primarily concern us. They were as sheep without a shepherd, seeking reality and vitality, running hither and thither after anyone who held out to them a hope for their heart's desire.

Not satisfied to continue his search locally, Fox left home at nineteen and for four years wandered about in search of any who could persuade him of the truth he sought. All those whom he consulted he found to be blind leaders of the blind—conformist priests and non-conformist preachers alike. They had nothing for him. "When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone," he says, "so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition'; and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy."

Here was something of which Fox was sure and of which he was never again in doubt. There are two features of the experience just quoted which must be emphasized: to those who are seeking a faith, it must come alone from Christ Jesus, by whom Fox meant the eternal Word of God, manifested in time by the historical Jesus of Nazareth, the beloved Son of the Father full of grace and truth; the other feature is that this must be known

not through the cunning devices of man's wisdom, not by reading and going to sermons, but by direct revelation in human experience. It is not given to everyone to hear such a clear voice of authority as George Fox heard. But millions of people have heard it in one convincing form or another.

Neither Fox nor his successors were greatly concerned with theological dogma. He stated his faith in a letter to the Governor of Barbados in 1671, but there is nothing in it which is unorthodox: the fall of man and his salvation through Jesus Christ alone is an essential doctrine of Catholics, Calvinists, Methodists and all the principal communions: We shall see why the Friends were persecuted, but it was only in slight degree for alleged unorthodoxy.

Fox assured every man that he could now carry his Church with him and be certain that he had a private wire always reserved for his use. Man was assured of the continual presence of God within, and he could dispense with a human "central" through whom all heavenly truths must be relayed at a fixed tariff in the form of tithes and salaries. The Quakers have eliminated the middleman in religion. The common people who heard Fox felt that they now had a religion of their own, something that each man could have for himself. God was in man personally, and that thought at once made life worth living. It filled Fox with joy, and he must tell others of his great discovery. Convincement came suddenly. Men and women, as soon as they were convinced, became publishers of the truth. Men left the army, paid preachers became exponents of a free gospel, even Justices were persuaded by the patent sincerity of the Quakers who were brought before them. "The Lord's power was over all."



The *precise* channel, if there was any, through which Fox was influenced by the writings and practices of the Continental reformers to whom we have referred, is not known. Books were in existence of which he had knowledge and some of which he possessed. What was revealed to him so vividly was already in the air. Religious refugees and artisans coming to England from the Continent strengthened the belief that the Reformation of the sixteenth century had not gone far enough, had not been thorough. Calvin and Luther had made a good start, but they had clung to an outward and visible Church with written creeds and confessions, a paid ordained ministry, two outward sacraments of Baptism and the Supper, and they both had close and disastrous affiliations with the secular powers of the State resulting in intolerance and persecution. In the eyes of these small sects, Protestantism had failed. It should have allowed man to have his own intercourse with God and to interpret the Scriptures not as a blueprint for a State Church, but as an individual guidebook to be read and interpreted with the same Spirit which had inspired holy men of old to write them. To this doctrine the early Quakers held, as they still do today.

In the seventeenth century there was plenty in this doctrine to arouse suspicion and hostility of Protestants and Catholics alike. For the mere existence of such a doctrine threatened the authority of the established Churches and consequently that uniformity of creed which all State religions seek. The point was reached where the Quaker neophytes would neither go to worship in the "steeple-houses" nor pay tithes for the support of the State ministers; they did not ask for the rites of the Church at either birth, marriage or burial; they would not fight in the armies, nor take a judicial

oath. So much on the negative side. On the affirmative side, they insisted on freedom of worship and speech when and where they chose to assemble; they set up their own schools; they settled their affairs among themselves out of court; they took care of their own poor and distressed; they paid to Caesar only the things that are Caesar's in the form of taxes; and they called all and sundry to repentance and to live "soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." Where practicable, the first Quakers followed the customs of primitive Christians: they traveled by twos and threes to spread the Gospel; they accepted hospitality from their fellows but no compensation; when in prison they sang psalms and worked at their trade if permitted; they took up collections of money for their poor; the leaders wrote and printed epistles of advice and counsel to newly organized groups; they practiced the Pauline virtues of modesty, simplicity and temperance.

For four years after 1647 George Fox journeyed in his own and neighboring counties, sharing his experience with sympathetic persons and small groups of nonconformists. His first signal success as a preacher to the multitudes came at Pendle Hill in Lancashire in 1652, where he had one of his visions "of the places where the Lord had a great people to be gathered," and shortly afterward at Preston Patrick he preached to a great company so powerfully that there was a well-nigh general conviction. This must be regarded as one of the great moments in his life, where the fact that he had a message for others was abundantly proven. It was about this time that his travels brought him to Ulverston where he got into trouble with Priest Lampitt for interfering with the church service. But the affair brought him the sym-

pathy and friendship of Margaret Fell, the mistress of Swarthmore Hall near by. The whole story of their friendship and later marriage is one of the romances of Quakerism and should be read in the charming book of Maria Webb, *The Fells of Swarthmore Hall*.

By 1654 three score Publishers of Truth had moved south from the northern counties to proclaim the Truth. Most of them were plain men, but some were possessed of learning—former ministers in other sects, predecessors of Penn, Penington and Barclay in the next generation. Regarding many of those first itinerant ministers we are well informed: Fox, Nayler, Dewsbury, Burrough, Farnsworth, Hubberthorne, Parnell, Howgill, Stubbs, Camm, Audland, Whitehead. Of Camm and Audland it was testified by that courageous convert, Barbara Blaugdone, that their "behaviour and deportments were such that it preached before ever they opened their mouths." Young most of them and ready to suffer for their faith. Dewsbury spent nineteen years in Warwick jail alone, little James Parnell died of cruelty in prison at the age of twenty, Burrough and Hubberthorne died in Newgate, Mary Dyer was hanged in Boston shortly after three other Quakers, George Fox spent nearly six years in prison, and Margaret Fell Fox though of good birth was not overlooked, any more than Penn and Penington in the next generation. It is a stirring story of devotion, courage and spiritual triumph, to be read in their own autobiographies or in trustworthy accounts of their sufferings collected by Besse in 1753, and by Bishop, Sewel and others based upon them.

What were the crimes for which these people suffered? Dr. Elbert Russell has conveniently listed them: non-payment of tithes, non-attendance at church serv-

ices, refusal to honor magistrates in language and by hat-honor, refusal to take oaths, vagrancy of traveling Friends, breaking the Sabbath by traveling to meetings, refusal to plead in court according to recognized procedure, blasphemy on the grounds of assumed divinity on the part of those preaching the validity of the Inner Light, alleged disparagement of the Scriptures as the Word of God, refusal to perform military service, the indecency of men and women going partially naked "as a sign," rioting and disturbance of public peace by preaching at unauthorized times and in public places, failure to light up their homes for victories and feast days. There is not much evidence of theological unorthodoxy in all this. Aside from informal mistreatments by mobs, the common punishments for these offenses were prison, whipping, the stocks, forced ejection from certain parishes in which the Quaker preachers were found, heavy fines and distraint of household goods, livestock and tools of their trade, deprivation of certain rights as citizens, and finally banishment beyond seas and the pronouncement of *praemunire*. This last penalty was imposed under an old statute for refusal to take the oath of allegiance and supremacy and carried with it the loss of estate, outlawry, and imprisonment during the King's pleasure. It was frequently imposed, but could be revoked in individual cases by a royal pardon.

Any reader unfamiliar with the times of which we are speaking may be interested in the treatment of these Quakers authorized by the authorities or tolerated when inflicted by the mob. These two instances are now printed in modern English from the contemporary records included by Dr. Norman Penney in his *The First Publishers of Truth* (London, 1907). The first concerns

little James Parnell who died in 1656 in his twentieth year from the punishment here decribed. As the custom was, he had disputed in a church after the sermon by a minister at Coggeshall, when on his way back to Colchester he was arrested:

“Then he went out into the highway, and was passing quietly to a Friend’s house in the town from whence he came, but one Dionysius Wakering stepped out after him and told him he arrested him in the name of the Protector, and from thence he was sent prisoner to Colchester Castle by a mittimus signed by Dionysius Wakering, Thomas Cooke, Herbert Pelham, and Wm. Harlackenden; and from thence, at the next Assizes, was had to Chelmsford, being kept on the chain with thieves and murderers day and night; and when he appeared at the Bar, Judge Hill urged the jury to find him guilty, and would not suffer him to speak to them to clear himself, but fined him forty pounds, as he pretended for contempt of the magistracy and ministry, and committed him close prisoner in the aforesaid castle, with a charge not to let any of the ‘giddy headed people’ (as he called Friends) come at him. So the jailer denied Friends to come to him, and would let none come in but such as came to abuse him; and the jailer’s wife set her man to beat him, and swore she would have his blood, and sometimes they would not let him have any victuals, and at other times would set the prisoners to take away such as was brought to him, and would not permit him a trundle bed, which some Friends had procured for him, but forced him to lie on the stones, which in a wet season would run down with water. And when he was in a room, for which he paid four pence a night, he was threatened, if he did but walk to and fro in it. Then

they put him in a hole in the castle wall, which is very high from the ground, and set a ladder which was too short by six foot; and when his friends would have provided a basket and a cord for him to draw up his victuals in, they would not suffer it, but caused him to come down by a rope to the ladder, or else he must have famished in the hole. He being one day climbing up with his victuals in one hand (and being through hard usage much benumbed in his limbs), and coming to the top of the ladder, catching at the rope with one hand, missed of it, and fell a very great height down upon the stones, by which fall he was very much bruised in his head and arms, and taken up for dead.

“Then they put him in a little, low hole, called the Oven (which place was so little that some baker’s ovens have been larger though not so high), without the least hole for air or smoke; and after he was a little recovered, they would not suffer him to take a little air, which was but once desired by him, finding in himself a want of breath, and although some did offer their bond of forty pounds, and one to lie body for body, that he might come to their house till he was recovered, yet they would not permit it, and it being desired that he might but walk in the yard, it was answered, he should not walk so much as to the castle door. And the door being once opened, he did but take the freedom to walk forth in a close, stinking yard before the door, and the jailer came in a rage and locked up the hole where he lay, and shut him out in the yard all night in the coldest time of all the winter. So, finding that nothing but his blood would satisfy them, great application was made to those in a superior authority, but to no purpose. Thus, he having endured about ten months imprisonment and having

passed through many deep trials and exercises which the Lord enabled him to bear with courage and faithfulness, he laid down his head in peace, and died a prisoner and faithful martyr for the sake of the Truth, under the hands of a persecuting generation, in the year 1656. His body was buried in the castle yard, being the burial place of the prisoners, by reason the jailer refused to deliver the body without fees."

The next experience is that of Elizabeth Fletcher, then about seventeen years old, and Elizabeth Leavens, later the wife of Thomas Holme. Here is what happened to them at Oxford:

"The 20th day of the 4th month, 1654, came to this city two maids, named Elizabeth Fletcher and Elizabeth Holme, who went through the streets, and into the colleges, steeple and tower houses, preaching repentance, and declaring the word of the Lord to the people. On the 25th day of the same month, they were moved to Martin's mass-house (alias) Carefox, where one of those maids, after the priest had done, spake something in answer to what the priest had before spoken in exhortation to the people, and presently by two Justices were sent to prison, and on the morrow, those Justices asked the Mayor if the Justices met that day or not.

"The above-mentioned Thomas Williams, who was Mayor, answered he knew no business they had.

"The Justices replied, 'There are two Quakers that were put into prison yesterday.'

"The Mayor said, 'Let those Justices that committed them, if they have any law against them, act it upon them, if not, let them be set free'; as for his part, he had nothing to say against them, but if they wanted food, money, or raiment, he would take care they should be

supplied, (a memorable passage of the power of Truth that had such influence on the Mayor to show kindness to the servants of the Lord so publicly, considering the place).

“But, to the infamy and perpetual reproach of the scholars and their accomplices, take the following account. So the before mentioned two Justices, that committed them, met about it, and sent for one called Doctor Owen, Vicechancellor, but the aforesaid Thomas Williams, Mayor, perceiving they were cruelly bent against them, could not be satisfied until he went to the Town-hall, being in care for the poor prisoners; which being brought, the Vicechancellor and Justices earnestly inquired from whence they came, and their business in Oxford. They answered they were commanded of the Lord to come; and it being demanded what to do, they answered, to declare against sin and ungodliness, which they lived in, and at this answer the Vicechancellor and Justices ordered their punishment, to be whipped out of town, and demanding of the Mayor to agree to the same, and for refusing, said they would do it of themselves, and signing a paper, the contents whereof was this, to be severely whipped, and sent out of town as vagrants; and forthwith, because of the tumult, they was put into the cage, a place common for the worst of people; and accordingly, the next morning, they was whipped, and sent away, and on the backside of the city, meeting some scholars, they were moved to speak to them, who fell on them very violently, and drew them into John’s College, where they tied them back to back and pumped water on them, until they were almost stifled; and they being met at another time as they passed through a grave-yard, where a corpse was to be buried, Elizabeth Holme spake



something to the priest and people, and one Ann Andrews thrust her over a grave-stone, which hurt she felt near to her dying day."

After the Restoration and the fear aroused by the plot of the Fifth Monarchy men, we may amplify the charges against the Quakers by referring to Norman Penney's *Extracts from State Papers Relating to Friends*. Here we find that the Quakers were charged with the possession of seditious literature, i.e., the unlicensed pamphlets in which they fought their enemies and proclaimed their faith; the possession of weapons and powder, apparently as dealers in these articles in those early days of the Society; identification with Fifth Monarchy men and later with the Jesuits as plotters and intriguers against the State; suspicious correspondence not understood by the civil authorities any more than the Quaker funds for the aid of those distressed by sufferings were understood. These latter charges were of course brought by jittery authorities, many of them by professional informers who shared heavily in the fines and distraint of goods. The Quakers could easily have cleared themselves, but being unwilling to swear in court or take the oath of allegiance, their pleas in defense were often not even heard, and they were whisked away to jail where they languished for months or years. A touching trait is found in the numerous cases where Friends offered to lie in prison body for body as a substitute for others who were ill through long confinement.

This reference to the sufferings of Friends during the first forty years of their Society has been obligatory. The Society arose against a background of ecclesiastical privilege and governmental suspicion. By their courage, faith and long suffering the Quakers gained for all of us

privileges which may never have to be suffered for again.

In the earliest years of the preaching mission anyone was considered a Friend who renounced "ungodliness and worldly lusts," attended meetings for worship and adopted the Quaker way of life as then practiced. There was as yet no formal Society with a registered membership, though one could be excluded from the fellowship for gross misdemeanors for which he refused to give satisfaction. The Society was more like a vast fraternity with interlocking interests and contacts, with beneficial provisions and with a common faith. But where did authority lie? By 1666 George Fox, just out of his long imprisonment at Lancaster and Scarborough, broken in body but not in spirit, saw the necessity as did Edward Burrough of a stable organization which will be set forth in a later chapter.

Beside the stable social organization devised by George Fox, we must seek in its early missionary spirit the cause of the survival of this small sect of Christians whose beginnings were attended with such persecution. The Friends thought of their discovery as of moment to the whole world. They soon thought in global terms. They began naturally with Holland and with the young American colonies—certain West Indies, and New England. Ames, Caton, Stubbs, later Fox, Penn, Barclay, Keith and others went to Holland and western Germany, where there was a sympathetic hearing for their message. Several meetings were set up in Holland and Germany. We hear of the first Friends in trouble in New England almost as soon as we hear of them in the old country. Four Quakers were eventually hanged in Boston, others lost ears and were banished. Those who could not reach Boston directly went to Barbados and took off for the mainland from there.

George Fox himself in 1671 arriving via Barbados visited most of the inhabited places from the Chesapeake to Narragansett Bay. Despite the difficulties of travel, not only English men but women continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to visit America after sea voyages which required from four to twelve weeks. Not only scattered Quaker communities, but the general public were called by these travelers to repentance and to a vital religion which should overflow into a purified and righteous life. The history of the Quakers in the American colonies is, of course, a chapter apart, but it is well to remember that William Penn's Holy Experiment was for about seventy years until 1756 the most favorable opportunity ever offered for the application of Quaker theory to a tolerant government with a maximum of liberty for the citizens and with good will even for Indians.

In the early history of the Society of Friends there are four sad pages of error and misunderstanding. We must look at them because they indicate certain dangers inherent in Quakerism. They concern James Nayler, John Perrot, Story and Wilkinson, and George Keith, together with a small number of followers. The old soldier, Nayler, become one of the very chief Publishers of Truth and close associate of Fox, created a scandal by allowing himself to be led astray by the praise and adulation of a few followers in London who set him above Fox. His saddest act was his entry into Bristol on horseback to the cries of Hosannah, as if he were the Lord himself entering Jerusalem. For this he was tried by Parliament for blasphemy, had his forehead branded with a B, had his tongue bored through, and was condemned for some years to prison. Later he repented of all, was reconciled with Fox and led an exemplary life.

His experience illustrates the human weakness of even the strongest, the poison of personal jealousy when fanned by feminine adulation; also the dangerous extremes to which the claims of the Inner Light may lead one whose head was for the moment turned.

To the Inner Light's effect upon a weak head must also be ascribed John Perrot's apostasy. He came back from his Roman prison with extravagant ideas. He carried the idea of personal leadings, particularly in worship, to its logical but inconsiderate extreme. Claiming a higher revelation than that of Fox, he asserted the right to worship where, when and how he pleased, and kept his hat on during prayer. For about ten years there were some followers of Perrot called "hat men" in England and in Barbados where Perrot died discredited, and his influence ceased. The hat controversy under cover of private revelation shows individual vagaries in conflict with social standards of behavior upon which the group is agreed.

John Story and John Wilkinson were two leaders who resented the authority of Fox in affairs relating to the Society's organization. The separation fostered by them had nothing to do with theology. In the contested points of unequal merit raised by them the whole question of church discipline and procedure was involved. An absence of love and forbearance was noticeable. Many discussions were held and documents drawn up. But though much ill will and recrimination developed, the separation died down after the death of Story in 1681 leaving no permanent traces.

George Keith was an early Scot convert, a brilliant scholar, sometime a master of the William Penn Charter School in Philadelphia, who later became persuaded that

Friends did not sufficiently honor the historical Christ. Their insistence upon Christ the eternal Word of God as set forth in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel laid them open to this charge of not being Christians in the contemporary sense. Keith founded the "Christian Quakers" amid much controversy. He was "disowned" in Philadelphia and later in London, continued to stir up trouble and finally joined the Church of England and sought to convert Friends at home and in America. His separation was the first on theological grounds.

After these sad but perhaps inevitable happenings, it is a satisfaction to recall three fair flowers of Quakerism in the second generation: Penington, Penn and Barclay. They were all in the technical sense "gentlemen," well educated and well connected. Penington was the son of Sir Isaac Penington, sometime Lord Mayor of London and a Puritan member of the Long Parliament; Penn was the son of Admiral Sir William Penn, and became the step-son-in-law of Penington through his love marriage with Guli Springett; Barclay was the son of Colonel David Barclay of Ury and through his mother a cousin of the reigning Stuarts. Each of these men made a great contribution to Quakerism through the consecration of his talents, and together they inevitably lent the movement a social prestige which it had not before possessed.

Penington was a mature man of forty-two and a practiced writer when he became a Friend in 1658. Of this experience he says: "The Lord . . . gave me such an inward demonstration and feeling of the seed of life, that I cried out in my spirit, This is he, this is he; there is not another, there never was another. He was always near me, though I knew him not." He found in the

young widow Mary Proud Springett a loving wife who understood his gentle mystical disposition. Often a prisoner for conscience' sake, his influence has been exercised through his writings, always highly valued among the most beautiful and convincing specimens of Quaker literature.

Of Penn who has been called one of the greatest Englishmen of the seventeenth century, we need hardly speak. He was a mighty preacher, writer, traveler, statesman and founder of a commonwealth beyond seas where he spent, however, only four of his seventy-four years. He was "convinced" at the age of twenty-three by the preaching in Ireland of Thomas Loe an itinerant minister. Loe's effective sermon began with the words: "There is a faith that overcomes the world, and there is a faith that is overcome by the world." Penn like Loe chose the former.

Robert Barclay, after a narrow escape from being either a Presbyterian or a Catholic, was convinced like the Colonel his father, "for," he says, "when I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them which touched my heart; and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me and the good raised up"; and he added truly "this is the surest way to become a Christian." His long *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, set forth in fifteen Propositions, served as the official exposition of Quakerism until the nineteenth century. "His main plea is that religion cannot be based upon dogmatic theology, but must come directly from God to the human heart, and that God's spiritual power is able to transform human nature." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Louella M. Wright, *The Literary Life of the Early Friends*, N. Y., 1932, p. 56. By permission of Columbia University Press.

So there in outline are the beginnings of Quakerism until the death of George Fox in 1691. He had directed the movement for forty years. If we have noticed some human weakness, nevertheless the Society had been kept on a high plane of spiritual and ethical purity. Friends had kept "atop of the world," had learned the power of the Spirit within, and by living it out in their lives regardless of persecution, they had already gained precious assets of freedom and toleration for all their fellow-citizens. Because of their peculiar testimonies they long remained the objects of popular ridicule, but their place before the law had been greatly strengthened and the writings of Barclay, Penn and Penington had well-nigh silenced the ecclesiastical attacks leveled against them.

### *Spirit versus Letter*

When George Fox died in 1691 the first period of Quakerism drew to a close. Most of the early Publishers of Truth had already died, many as the result of imprisonment and hardships, and even Barclay and Pennington were gone. Margaret Fell Fox lived on until 1702, William Penn until 1718, and that old defender of the Faith, George Whitehead, remained the most authoritative figure in the Society until his death at an advanced age in 1723. It is a remarkable fact that one man, George Fox, had maintained for forty years the leadership of a growing religious Society, numbering toward the close of his life perhaps 50,000. Incessantly writing, preaching and caring for his flock, he had the advantage of a powerful frame, an imposing personality and, most important, the conviction of the truth and of his ability to learn it at its source. Penn, twenty years his junior but who came to know him well, has drawn his portrait in a preface intended for the first edition of the famous *Journal*. "In all things," he says, "he acquitted himself like a man, yea as a strong man, a new and heavenly-minded man." And he particularly adds that he never heard anyone so gifted in prayer as Fox. A direct appreciation of the character and activities of Fox should be sought in Fox's *Journal*, or in the biographies printed in more recent times.

After the Toleration Act of 1689 the external situation of the Society was greatly improved. The right to



worship in open meetings after its own manner without danger of interruption or arrest was definitely gained. The Friends were no longer despised outcasts in the eyes of the ecclesiastical or civil powers. As Braithwaite says, the Quaker "no longer held life and property at the mercy of prejudiced zeal or legalized greed. He had passed from persecution into peace. His weather-beaten Ark, which had stoutly ridden out the storm, found itself, as by miracle, in calm waters. It seemed a time for refitting the ship; not for the fresh heroic adventure of launching forth into the deep."

We have seen that Fox and his early associates put the world and all its wickedness—the modern Babylon—on one side, and devotion to the revelation of God's truth to men on the other. It was evil opposed to righteousness—a purely dualistic conception of the world. Under this conception all national calamities were explained in Old Testament fashion as punishment sent from God for national sin. Repentance, then, was in order, and the Friends preached it. When they were opposed and persecuted by the allied powers of Church and State, it is not strange that this dualistic conception should have developed and prevailed. It gave a "set" to their whole outlook on the world and their duty in this life. There could be for them no compromise with what was unalterably wicked and earthly. The Friends were extremists, "out and outers" for devotion to the Truth and for perfection of morals. Given the contemporary conditions, it was a natural attitude in a crusading sect, which starting at home reached out toward a hoped-for world conquest. It was a grand prospect, shared by not just a few, but by many Friends, who were willing to sacrifice all for its attainment. They could not do otherwise than

share in the enterprise by word of mouth, and by example in the practice of their daily lives. Very little organization, very little discipline in those first years were necessary to keep this goal before them. Like the first crusaders to the Holy Land, these Friends were on fire with a creative zeal which made them ready to stake all. When they once caught fire, no *man* could put them out.

It has been customary in all surveys of Quaker history to refer to the eighteenth century as the period of Quietism, when the Society settled down upon its lees and progressed little. The tendency within the Society after persecution closed was certainly to dig in, to entrench and protect itself from contact with a world which had not been kind to it. Henceforth, the purity, the integrity of the group was to be insured by strict observance of the Discipline, rather than by enthusiasm for a world conquest. We begin to detect a fusion of the missionary spirit seeking to save souls with the importance of the individual keeping in the strait and narrow path. Some Friends and groups of Friends will emphasize the saving of others' souls by active love; others will seek to save their own souls by an upright life. It is a question of emphasis. The eighteenth century was marked by a reign of law in Quakerism—of taboos and inhibitions.

Birtheright membership was established by London Yearly Meeting in 1737, the membership of children following that of their parents. The system has some manifest advantages in providing an early religious affiliation for youth; but on the other hand, it has resulted in a large paper membership of persons who, though never resigning in later life, have taken no part in the affairs of the Society, and have sometimes brought discredit upon it. Birtheright membership is not an essential of

Quaker faith. At the present time those Meetings which continue the practice might well give renewed consideration to the merits and drawbacks of birthright membership, and study the advantages of an associate membership for children.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Society was on the alert for infractions of the Discipline. A large amount of Monthly Meeting business was connected with disownments for marriage outside of the membership, for taking arms, for attendance at other places of worship where, as the old Philadelphia phrase had it, "the ministry is exercised at stated times and for pay," for unethical conduct and for an astonishing list of moral lapses. Every labor was extended by the Monthly Meeting to reclaim an erring member, but unless he issued a public "acknowledgement" satisfactory to the Meeting, he was disowned. The method, of course, was based upon cutting off the offending member. Friends were strict in those days. They had been raised in a stern school of discipline, and they were ready to cut to the bone in the hope of preserving the health and integrity of the body. On the whole, the method can hardly be called successful in attaining its purpose; it seems to us less considerate than the present policy of tolerance and forbearance for an erring brother. It is impossible to estimate the loss in membership to the Society through two centuries of disownment for marriage alone; for the loss was not only of *one* member of the contracting parties, but of their descendants as well. In any group of Americans, persons can be found who will say, sometimes with a touch of nostalgia, that one of his ancestors was "disowned for marrying out of Meeting."

All through the Quietist period we are now discussing, Quaker ministry was itinerant, comparatively innocent of any secular scholarship, dispensed in the love of the gospel and without other reward than the sense of obedience to the divine call. It was a ministry based upon the phraseology of the Bible, it emphasized the patient waiting for evidence of the divine will concerning the individual, and it stressed a rigid conformity of life with the hardening traditions of the Society. Faithfulness, punctuality, sobriety, honesty, accuracy, thoroughness, conformity in dress, language and bearing were all characteristic fruits of this period, when the popular conception of the Quakers as a peculiar people developed.

There were individual protests against this conformity in so far as it tended toward a lifeless form. Even before the seventeenth century closed, Margaret Fell Fox called back her Quakers from the forms that threatened them in eloquent words quoted by Braithwaite: "Christ Jesus saith that we must take no thought what we shall eat or what we shall drink or what we shall put on; but bids us consider the lilies, how they grow in more royalty than Solomon. But contrary to this, we must not look at no colors, nor make anything that is changeable colors, as the hills are, nor see them, nor wear them. But we must be all in one dress and one color. This is a silly poor gospel. . . . I see that our blessed, precious, holy Truth, that has visited us from the beginning, is kept under; and these silly, outside, imaginary practices is coming up, and practiced with great zeal, which hath often grieved my heart." And again a little later: "Legal ceremonies are far from gospel freedom. It's a dangerous thing to lead young Friends much into the observance of outward things, which may be easily done; for they

can soon get into an outward garb, to be all alike outwardly; but this will not make them true Christians. It's the spirit that gives life." <sup>1</sup>

No account of eighteenth-century Quakerism would be complete without a reference to the journals of the period. They were a continuation of those curious confessions, testimonies and journals of the period 1650–1725 which Louella M. Wright has studied in *The Literary Life of the Early Friends*. Already before 1725 Friends had published over eighty religious confessions and journals—a number, she says, “probably greater than all the non-Quaker autobiographies printed in England during the preceding seventy-five years.” This of course does not include hundreds of pamphlets, doctrinal expositions and other ephemeral documents produced in its defense by the young Society. Friends early conceived of the autobiographical journal, not as a monument to egotism, but as a record of God’s dealings with them. These records were left usually to be published after death for the instruction and edification of children and posterity. The emphasis is therefore on religious activity, on travel in the ministry, on family visitation, and on the convictions to which the author has come as a result of his experiences. The tone of the eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century journals is notably pious, monotonous and conceived in a language filled with Biblical phraseology and with those consecrated phrases which Quakerism developed and which require a glossary for the uninitiated reader.

Any reader interested in the figurative language once used by such Quaker writers will find much of it in the *Journal of Joseph Hoag* (1762–1846). On one occasion

<sup>1</sup> *Second Period*, 518–519.

he says of an appointed meeting for worship: "I sat for a length of time in much poverty of spirit, closely exercised, fearing I had not done right in making the appointment; but after a while I was favored to get into a quiet, resigned state, and soon felt a gentle motion to rise on my feet, accompanied with a clear opening; in attending to it I had to move slowly and look well to my stepping-stones; yet was favored to experience the little stream that only came to the ancles (*sic*), to become a river to swim in." The last phrase is suggested by the 47th chapter of *Ezekiel*.

Yet, the best of these journals repay reading today: they throw light on localities and personages which are of interest to us, on customs and manners which are now relegated to oblivion, on the state of Society and its activities, and on certain wise judgments regarding the religious life which are still valid. Of the journals of the eighteenth-century Friends I recommend those of Thomas Story, John Griffith, Thomas Chalkley, John Churchman, Samuel Bownas, Samuel Fothergill, William Reckitt, Dr. John Rutty of Ireland, and of course John Woolman. All of these men, except Dr. Rutty, lived or traveled widely in America, so that they illustrate our own social history in the eighteenth century. Their journals make clear how great was the preoccupation of these leaders to keep the Society pure and undefiled by contacts with the world, and further to encourage ever greater faithfulness to the leadings of the Inner Light and to the specific regulations for individual and corporate conduct called the "Discipline." Successive Disciplines have changed little in substance since George Fox determined their scope in his recommendations and exhortations.

If we take the journal of John Griffith as an example, we find that, like all the other ministers of the period, he was a great believer in silence and observes that those convinced by silence in meetings usually stand their ground better and more permanently than those convinced by testimony or human eloquence. This is important if true. Unfortunately many people prefer to hear human instruction rather than the divine voice in silence, being like the ancient Israelites who said: "Let not God speak unto us lest we die, but let Moses speak unto us." There is naturally comment upon the "spiritual idleness" of many "professors" (i.e., members) in meetings for worship. All through his travels he analyzes the decline of Meetings due to worldliness, dependence upon a few gifted ministers, unfaithfulness in attendance, slackness in dealing with offenders against the Discipline, marriages with persons not in membership, and insufficient attention to answering the Queries. He mentions meetings in Philadelphia and in New England where fifteen hundred to two thousand were present including many strangers, but he frequently gave an "example" of silence when those present expected him to minister to them. This was a form of silent rebuke much used by traveling Friends who would sometimes sit several meetings in silence in order to teach those present to seek the Truth within themselves. Meetings were often of great length and followed each other in the travelers' program at the rate of one or two a day. In Philadelphia Griffith sat in a business session which lasted six and a half hours, and in meetings for worship ministers often sat through a period of spiritual strippedness for an hour or two before the spring began to rise within them. Once the flow started, the ministry

might be exercised at great length. Back in 1655 George Whitehead reported at Charsfield: "I was enabled to stand upon the stool [he was in an orchard] though slippery, near five hours that day, preaching the Truth."

Attendance at meetings was then as now cause for grave concern. Despite the large numbers present at some city meetings, it is evident that worldly interests and secular activities were cutting the attendance at many places. John Churchman (1705-1775) observed: "Friends in the beginning, if they had health and liberty, were not easily diverted from paying their tribute of worship to the Almighty on week-days as well as first-days; but after a while, when outward sufferings ceased, life and zeal decaying, ease and the spirit of the world took place with many; and thus it became customary for one or two out of a family to attend meetings, and to leave their children much at home. Parents also, if worldly concerns were in the way, could neglect their week-day meetings some times, yet be willing to hold the name, and plead excuse because of a busy time, or the like; but I believe that such a departure from primitive integrity ever did, and ever will, occasion a withering from the life of true religion."

Much of interest is offered also by the *Life and Travels* of Samuel Bownas (1676-1753). As a young man in meeting he was once fixed by the eye of a young woman, Anne Wilson, who while preaching pointed her finger directly at him and exclaimed: "A traditional Quaker, thou comest to meeting as thou went from it, and goes from it as thou camest to it, but art no better for thy coming. What wilt thou do in the end?" This disconcerting experience in a public meeting must have produced an effect. It did on Samuel Bownas. He was smitten like



St. Paul. He became a great preacher, visited America twice, experiencing a terrifying storm at sea of which he left a fine description. For alleged speaking in disparagement of the Anglican Church at Jamaica, Long Island, he was put in prison for months where he worked at shoemaking. As with William Penn and William Mead, two juries refused to convict him on the evidence and brought in a verdict of "Ignoramus," much to the discomfiture of the judge. A definite piece of information concerns the growth of Quakerism in America, for he says in 1728 that since his last visit twenty-one years before, fifty-six new meeting-houses had been erected in the eastern states. It is true that throughout this century Quakerism continued to spread in America, largely due to the unceasing labors of scores of traveling ministers who penetrated on foot or on horseback to the most remote regions with their call to a religion of the heart. Bownas accounts for the progress made by the fact that the youth were keeping to the profession of their parents and were "marrying in meeting." This feature of the Discipline was of vital concern to all the "public Friends" of the day.

Family visitation by "public Friends" was a peculiarly solemn exercise productive of much good. A religious visit was conducted on this wise: accompanied by an appointed member of the local Meeting, the visitor arrived at an hour previously agreed upon, when all the family was at once assembled in the parlor. After a few minutes of general conversation, a silence gradually developed out of which the visitor spoke to the condition of those present—often in considerable detail to the parents or children. After a final silence when prayer might be offered, the visitor withdrew. It was taking the solemnity

of a meeting for worship into the separate households and was very impressive. Certain Friends, like Stephen Grellet in the nineteenth century, were favored with a special gift for this difficult but effective service which often carried the visitor into all the families of the Monthly Meeting. The custom appears to have originated in Ireland about 1700<sup>2</sup> and was continued throughout Quakerdom for nearly two centuries. Through its lapse we have lost something precious. For a total stranger to come into a home with a message of advice and good will was a blessed experience. As Thomas Chalkley said: "Indeed, we being as one family all the world over, are generally glad to see each other." Another traveler, Robert Sutcliff, a little later, remarking on this hospitable feature of the Society, said: "I have often thought it is a great privilege in our Society that such an interchange of hospitality and freedom prevails among us. It has a great tendency to smoothe the path of life, especially to strangers in a strange land."

The picture we get of Quakerism in the eighteenth-century journals is naturally presented from the standpoint of "public Friends." In the course of their wide travels they judged of the vitality of the Meetings they visited by the response and the welcome which their messages received. No lack of consecration on their part is evident. Some were optimistic by temperament; others were more dour and likely to be depressed. That some felt a lack of spirituality and a growth of worldliness is evident. Such harked back to the first years of the Society with regret: "In those days the meetings of Friends

<sup>2</sup> George Fox in 1668, though with apparently a different thought in mind, advised: "All ye that are faithful, go to visit them that have been convinced, from house to house," the object being to "go and seek the lost sheep, and bring him home to the fold."

were more evidently favored with divine power, as they lived more devoted to Christ and consequently more abounding with his love flowing in their hearts," says James Gough in Ireland before the middle of the eighteenth century.

While the general picture shows great preaching activity, combined with a lethargy on the part of the rank and file of the Society, the century saw the beginnings of important humanitarian concerns which will come to fruition nearer our own times. In 1697 John Bellers laid before the London Meeting for Sufferings his *Proposals for Raising a College of Industry*, the social and economic provisions for which have aroused the interest of modern sociologists. He held that land and labor were the sources of national wealth, and that through cooperation a useful work-colony might support itself and its promoters. To us his plans are important as the first well thought-out project for that assistance of the poor which has in later times so occupied Quaker thought, and with which the names of Allen, Bedford, Sturge, Cadbury, Fry and Rowntree in England are later associated. As the century progressed, the investment of Quaker capital in new industries brought Friends to share in the social and economic problems of their employees. We shall note the development of a social conscience particularly in the nineteenth century. But already in the eighteenth century the industrial revolution forced certain problems upon the attention of conscientious employers. It is surprising to see how Quakers in England were turning in this century of religious Quietism toward industrialism, manufacturing and banking, and were laying the foundations of some large fortunes. Some were evidently not able to stand success, and separated from a sect in

which they no longer felt socially comfortable. But generally speaking, the industrial revolution found Friends fully conscious of their duties as employers under a new economic order. Their belief in the divine in man carried over effectively into practical work for his welfare.

The two important racial groups about whom the Quaker conscience grew uneasy in the eighteenth century were the Indians and the Negro slaves in the British colonies. As a lively concern for these peoples has continued to the present day, a more extended reference to the Quaker relations with them will be reserved until later. The persistent effort of Friends to secure justice for the ancient inhabitants of this continent is one of the bright pages in the Quaker history of our period. Another is the part of Friends in the anti-slavery movement. Negroes were practically unknown in England in 1650, and Friends had no program at first for their attitude toward them. George Fox in the Barbados in 1671 advised kindness to the slaves held there and desired the whites "to endeavor to train them up in the fear of God, those that were bought, and those born in their families, that all might come to the knowledge of the Lord." But the conscience of Friends had not yet been aroused to the iniquity of human slavery. It was, however, inevitable that it should be, as soon as they got a firsthand acquaintance with it. It was opposed to everything for which they stood.

The eighteenth century is called a period of Quietism. Under its influence, rather than under the influence of the seventeenth century, many Quakers still live. Introspection, a unique confidence in the Inner Light as the all-sufficient guide, a withdrawal from the duties of citizenship, narrowness of outlook, a distrust of advanced

education, a certain dour self-complacency—were the mark of a large part of the rank and file of the Society. But enough has been said to indicate how partial is such a description of eighteenth-century Quakerism. There was a ceaseless activity of traveling ministers across the seas and throughout the American colonies. In America the Society actually grew in numbers. The end of persecution doubtless weakened their fiber, but the Quakers still had something to say to the large crowds which attended their missionary meetings. Their conception of universal brotherhood drove them into consistent work on the two race problems which they touched. The Indians and the Negroes still regard the Friends as sympathetic allies among the Christian denominations. Furthermore, it was during this century that the Society fully developed its organization and the Discipline under which it still lives. We cannot overlook the importance of a period which produced so many great personalities and initiated so much of present humanitarian concern.

## *The Conflict of Liberal and Evangelical Trends*

The Quietism which we have seen develop in the Society of Friends during the eighteenth century produced an inactive spiritual complacency which has persisted to this day in many of its members. It is an unexpectant attitude, in which nothing is expected to disturb the peaceful execution of life's routine duties. Such persons are at peace with themselves and remain aloof socially from the rest of the world. They await the reward which is due to those who live righteously and attend to their own business. There were many distinguished examples of this quiet, unobtrusive faith already in the eighteenth century, and the type persisted all through the nineteenth century and into our own time. The virtues of such lives are manifest: fidelity to duty as understood, regularity, punctuality, simplicity in manner of life. People who lead such lives have a sense of limited liability. In America there were many such in the rural Meetings where Friends were engaged in agriculture. Such Friends intermarried and had large families, sought no public office, and worked on the land. They constituted a large part of American Quakerism, and we shall see later what a part they had to play in the Great Separation of 1827.

Excellent as their virtues were, there was danger of dry rot setting in. In fact, both in America and in England, the numbers of the Society fell away seriously all

through the nineteenth century. There were too many merely traditional Quakers, members who set observance of the Discipline above vital inspiration, and who spent their time, as the old Negro said of the members of another communion, in reading the minutes of the last meeting. There was no forward movement, no expectancy in such Friends. Such a Society could not grow. The "élan vital" was missing.

The effect of turning from an expansive Society in the seventeenth century to a seclusive Society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may be stated thus: the spiritual economy suffered from the administration of an intolerant and narrow-minded Discipline; the Bible and a teaching ministry were neglected; trust in the Inner Light alone dethroned intelligence in the ministry and notably reduced the place of prayer in worship; birthright membership produced a large number of useless paper members, while hundreds of the best brains of the Society were expelled for trivial offenses against the Discipline.

In tracing the history of any large movement, it is impossible to divide it exactly into centuries. The lethargy prevalent among country Friends began early in the eighteenth century and has continued since in many rural communities. The large number of Meetings in the Eastern States which have closed their doors is mute evidence that the vital fire was out. The incessant labors and travels of the "public Friends" who were concerned over the state of the Society did not suffice to overcome the deadly sleeping sickness. However ruthlessly the Discipline was applied, it did not succeed in keeping down the delinquencies which have left their trace in the Minutes of the Monthly Meetings through the eight-

eenth and nineteenth centuries. Many meetings sat in a dead silence between the visits of traveling Friends whose ministry sought to shake the dry bones. Such a traditional worship was not enough to hold some of the youth to marriage within the Society or to the Quaker peace testimony.

Such is the somewhat sodden spiritual soil into which new seeds were to be cast early in the nineteenth century. These seeds were of quite different kinds and origin, and though they grew rankly, they did not flourish together in peace and unity. The importance of the Wesleyan Methodist Movement in mid-eighteenth-century England will be recalled. This movement came at a time when spiritual religion was at an all-time low in that country. Where the early Quaker preachers had pointed to the Inner Light which is available to guide every man to his individual duty, the Methodists offered a more definite and specific program of salvation which did not fail to win vast throngs of adherents both in England and America. Confession of past sin, acceptance of the atonement for this sin offered by the historical Christ upon the Cross, a belief in the plenary inspiration of the Bible, renunciation of a trivial and vapid existence, and devotion to humanitarian concerns—these were all characteristic of the new crusade. This faith is definite, vivid, imaginative, cleansing, and had a wide appeal to the discouraged and downhearted. That such an appeal to the popular imagination and sentiment is far removed from the thought of primitive Quakerism does not alter the fact that Quakerism came to be deeply affected by this dramatic presentation of salvation for the common man.

The effect was both theological and humanitarian. Let us take the former first. The point to watch is the



alleged preëminence of the Inner Light, that of God in every man, as the guide of life. That this belief was united by early Friends with the exaltation of Christ as the only one who can speak to our condition, goes without saying. But it has been at least suggested by what we have said of Quietism, that Friends were tending to dwell upon the sufficiency of the individual guide, the eternal Word of *John* I, and to view Jesus as an example of the perfect life rather than as the propitiation for the sins of the world by the surrender of his life on Calvary. For many Friends the existence of the eternal Christ, the Word, within them, caused them to place less emphasis upon the Biblical account of the historical Christ and the meaning of his sacrificial death there attributed to him. For them the historical Jesus was primarily an example for us to follow, the love of God made manifest *for once* in the flesh, but *always* existent in a continued revelation to individuals who sought it in spirit and in truth. In their thought Christ was eternal and coeval with the Father, not a son miraculously conceived by the Virgin Mary. They thought primarily of Christ in them rather than in Bethlehem or on Calvary. Christmas was not even observed as a religious festival by Friends until recent times. The fact is significant. It is easy to see the unitarian drift here, and how under the unitarian thought that was sweeping the western world many Quakers might drift toward unitarianism in their theology.

The extended influence of Deism upon the Continent and in England, eliminating as it did in its extreme forms, the divinity of Christ, the New Testament revelation and the offices of the Church, came to reënforce the unitarian tendency in certain Protestant countries. Belief in the Supreme Being, of which we hear so much at

the time of the French Revolution, was as far as many virtuous men could go in the eighteenth century. If we may venture to put all this in very simple language, we may say that many good men viewed their responsibility to God as a private affair, to be settled without the intermediation of any propitiatory sacrifice on Christ's part or of any officer of a Church holding this doctrine. That this independence of ecclesiastical authority should be congenial to many who cherished the intimate possession of the Inner Light apart from all dogmatic authority was natural. Unitarian and even deistic seed had favorable ground prepared for it in the very central tenet of Quakerism. Such an acute observer as Thomas Story refers in his journal as early as 1735 to some English Friends who were "denying all revealed religion as contained in the Holy Scriptures, and asserting that there never was, is, or shall be, any other guide given unto men by God but his own reason, either in matters of duty toward God or man, religion or worship; denying sense of knowledge of any Spirit. And thus renouncing Christ, shake off his Cross and despise it; with all its discipline; and yet come to our Meetings as if they were Friends." <sup>1</sup>

Of course, the average Friend was quite incapable of any rigorous thought on these matters. The fact that his evangelical outreach was already shortened simply made him fall into this rather placid acceptance of what seemed simple, devoid of controversial creeds and rituals, and sufficient for his unexacting requirements.

It was against this drift toward individual liberalism and ethical self-sufficiency that the new Evangelical Methodism set itself. This was a form of religion which

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Thomas Story*, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1747, p. 721.

prescribed a very definite program of salvation, involving a clear and exacting theology. It was a movement full of enthusiasm, and it had a wide and immediate application in humanitarian activity. The organization of Methodism need not concern us. It had no affiliation with the organization of Quakerism, which has to this day remained unique. But we must see how Methodist faith and works affected the Society of Friends.

Until very recently Friends have never officially studied theology in preparation for the ministry. Like some other mystics, they trusted to direct revelation of truth, and they wished only that the individual should keep his private wire open for the communication of it. They were unprepared to weigh the dogmatic and controversial forms which Protestant theology had taken since Luther and Calvin in the sixteenth century. But there were some Quakers who were prepared to do so. We are thinking now of the generation about 1800 when we say that some of the strongest preachers of the Society had joined it from other Churches, where they had thought or were prepared to think in more orthodox evangelical fashion along theological lines. In England Mary Dudley had been a Methodist, Thomas Shillitoe an Episcopalian; in America Rebecca Jones had been an Episcopalian, David Sands a Presbyterian, William Savery was of immediate Huguenot descent, while Stephen Grellet, the greatest of them all, was a sudden convert from Catholicism. Beside these outstanding persons who joined the Society bringing with them certain habits of mind, there was a more general contact of the Friends with evangelical thought in England. Emerging from their ivory tower of isolation, some prominent English Friends gradually allied themselves with other enthu-

siastic laborers in humanitarian fields. Here they met other Nonconformists and Low Church Episcopalians. Most important was the work in the anti-slavery cause. But also significant are the establishment of Sunday Schools, the Lancasterian schools for the instruction of the poor, the temperance crusade, the reform of prisons, care of the insane, and relief of the poor. In these activities the Gurneys, William Allen, William Forster, Joseph Lancaster, Peter Bedford, Elizabeth Fry, Stephen Grellet and others were closely associated with non-Friends.

These humanitarian activities did not for a long time find a place on the agenda of Quaker business meetings. But they were making contacts for Friends of wealth and ability with others who professed an evangelical form of Christianity. Though Friends through their Meeting for Sufferings had long been alive to the sufferings of humanity, they had not before joined much with other charitable persons in their relief work as citizens. There was in Methodism and Low Church Anglicanism plenty to attract broad-minded Friends. But the plenary authority of the Scriptures, the natural depravity of man since the fall of Adam, the deity and atonement of Christ, by belief in which alone could man be justified—these were subjects upon which eighteenth-century Quakers had not been trained to think deeply. They were unprepared by their individual “leadings” to accept or reject with confidence such definite and exacting theological concepts. Fresh air was being let into the vacuum of eighteenth-century Quietism. It made some gasp for a breath of that fresh air, while to others it seemed like poison gas.

Here then was the theological parting of the ways: on

one hand, the rationalistic, liberal, quietistic interpretation of truth which tended to underemphasize the scriptural revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who was "crucified, dead and buried" as an expiation for the sins of the world, and which tended to put all its trust in the continued revelation of God's will vouchsafed to men personally and sufficiently in the silence of the individual heart; on the other hand were those who entered again into the full stream of Protestant, and indeed of Catholic orthodoxy, and found therein a new driving force which they checked somewhat to run in Quaker channels. The former group perpetuated the old Quietist tradition; the latter group comprised the more stirring concerned Friends whose names are associated with much of the activity of nineteenth-century Quakerism. In both groups were admirable types of Quaker character. Neither group sought to change the traditional manner of Quaker worship. But they were opposed to each other and not altogether comfortable in each other's fellowship. In England a serious separation was avoided, perhaps due to greater tolerance and mutual charity, but in America Friends were headed for the Great Separation of 1827—the most serious breach which the Society has experienced and which only now is on the way to be healed.

We must now point out another factor which contributed to this unhappy result. The theological separation was bad enough, but it is understandable because different people find in different beliefs the truth they need. But the next factor we are to consider is less pardonable and more regrettable. In its contact with the Church of England, Methodism produced the Low Church, i.e., a communion in which simplicity, sincerity

and popular enthusiasm were fused with the dignified beauties and the ancient hierarchy of the Establishment in England. Low Churchmen were still Churchmen, but they took on some of the colors and habits of Methodism. Similarly, Friends trained in the Quaker manner of thought and worship could still remain Friends while embracing the theology of their newly found associates of the other Churches. These evangelical Friends of the nineteenth century lived in cities, were better educated because in better circumstances, and it was from their ranks that ministers and elders were largely appointed. In Philadelphia particularly they had affairs of the Meeting in their hands. Without their approval business had little chance. It was a Yearly Meeting controlled by such men which revised the Philadelphia Discipline in 1806, making it cause for disownment to "deny the divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit, or the authenticity of the Scriptures." Thus, while maintaining the Quietist insistence on immediate revelation, the evangelical element in the Yearly Meeting thought to buttress its orthodoxy against any attack from within upon the authority of the Scriptures.

Among those who frequented the annual sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in the early years of the nineteenth century was Elias Hicks of Long Island. He was a popular preacher among country Friends within the limits of the Yearly Meeting. His message of liberal and rational theology, his simple garb and speech, appealed to many Friends who followed him rather than the evangelical and orthodox elders of the Yearly Meeting. Many resented the authority and denunciation of the latter, Hicks was an old man of nearly eighty years

when the Great Separation came. But the body of the Meeting in 1827 was prepared to proclaim its independence of highly centralized authority. Two-thirds of the Yearly Meeting withdrew after a final united session on April 21, 1827. The absorbing story of this most devastating separation and the events that led up to it is clearly told by Rufus M. Jones in *Later Periods of Quakerism*.

After April 21, the Separatists immediately organized, addressed epistles, and assumed control of those subordinate Meetings where they were in the majority. The division in these Meetings was lamentable and resulted in some unseemly displays of animosity. The separation of neighbors and even of families in one camp or the other produced hard feeling which in some cases persisted until quite recent times and prevented all useful cooperation between the two Yearly Meetings for nearly a century. It has been said that no hatred is more implacable than that caused by a difference in theological beliefs. It is the more sad to reflect that so few of those affected had sufficient experience to understand the points at issue and to exercise a becoming forbearance in the discussion of them. One can but regret that George Fox with his insistence upon Unity in the Light or William Penn with his skill in practical diplomacy were not present at the session of April 21.

Personalities had too much to do with the Separation. Rural resentment against the authority of Philadelphia elders was an immediate cause of the Separation in Philadelphia. Of about twenty-five thousand members in 1827, a small number really controlled the business and Discipline of the Yearly Meeting, and many of these were well-to-do Friends, deeply imbued with the new

evangelical ideas imported from England during the preceding quarter of a century.

A few words must be devoted to these English emissaries who meant well, but who contributed greatly to the feeling which produced the Separation not only in Philadelphia, but also in New York, Baltimore, Ohio and to a lesser degree in Indiana. New England, Virginia, North Carolina and of course London and Dublin were spared a serious separation at this time, and thus the so-called Orthodox maintained a decided majority in English-speaking Quakerdom. The English capacity for compromise worked well in this case, though in the British Isles there was a marked reserve toward the extreme evangelicalism of one wing of the Society. It was members of this extreme wing who came to America and took an unintended part in dividing American Quakerism. Traveling widely, these ministers preached an orthodox evangelical gospel in its entirety as an offset to the liberal tendencies already manifest in American Quakerism. The Evangelicals suspected Hicks' ministry from afar, and in their eyes he was the focal danger to the unity of the Society. Open disapproval of Hicks did not manifest itself in Philadelphia, however, until 1819, from which time he became an object of increasing suspicion to a large element in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Those who favored Hicks liked him personally and adopted his ideas without profound thought, because he offered a rallying point for their growing opposition to the Evangelical party both at home and abroad.

That there was real danger in the rationalistic views of Hicks is seen in the memoirs of his kinsman Edward Hicks, a personality almost as paradoxical as Dr. Rutt



in Ireland, but very fair-minded in his analysis of the causes and results of the Separation. Himself a Hicksite, he wrote in 1846, "I fear that here is the cause of all our deficiencies: some of us do not believe in that Jesus, as Paul did—do not believe he is anything 'more than a man,' 'a great reformer.'" Concerning his cousin, he records: "He only saw, as he thought, the Society going, to use the figure of a distinguished minister, 'going full gallop towards Rome,' or in other words, toward Trinitarianism, and fearing they would finally split on that fatal rock of Anti-Christ, Elias exerted himself with great zeal and ability; and as great men are not always wise, nor wise men prudent, he might sometimes have run so near the opposite rock of Unitarianism as to be a little scratched and injured by some of its cold barren points." He was convinced that this "Unitarian rock was likely to be the most dangerous to his professing Friends" and stated shortly before his death "that he was now more afraid of his professing friends than he was of his professing enemies."

To sum up, the Great Separation of 1827 is indirectly due to a conflict between liberalism and rationalism inclining toward Unitarianism on one side, and a rigid orthodox attitude based upon the popular evangelical program of salvation reintroduced into the English-speaking world by Methodism on the other. Due to local conflict of personalities and resultant animosities, the two parties joined battle in Philadelphia. That the issue was not inevitable appears from the manner in which certain other Yearly Meetings avoided a separation. Such a crisis must never be allowed to develop again. There will always be some difference in the private belief of individual members. But in Philadelphia there is nearly

complete harmony in worship and in the methods employed for the betterment of society about us. In drawing Friends together "hereaways" their marked social gifts have been of inestimable help.

Largely as a result of the contact with English Evangelical Quakerism between 1810 and 1840, Friends in America emerged from their shell. Having long waged an essentially defensive warfare, they now went more boldly against the enemy of mankind. It is true that numbers continued to drop until in 1945 there were only about half as many Friends in Philadelphia as there were in 1830; more and more Meetings were closed as the century progressed; the visits of foreign and traveling ministers fell off; and there was much traditional routine in the business considered. But underneath there was an activity among the survivors of a Discipline ruthlessly enforced, and Friends began to take a broader view of their duty in the light of better education. Some large fortunes were amassed, the generous disbursement of which has enabled many Quaker institutions to flourish.

Considerable attention has been given here to the Great Separation, for in the history of Quakerism it was the great tragedy whose causes few young members of the Society now understand. Unfortunately, we are not quite through with divisions. There was one other which has produced in America a sensible effect. John Wilbur of Rhode Island opposed the English evangelical minister, Joseph John Gurney, and all his works. Wilbur was an old-fashioned conservative Friend of the preceding century, with no tinge of Hicksism, but keeping clear of all external and creaturely activities, Sunday Schools, Bible study and final scriptural authority for which Gurney stood. As unevangelical as possible he was the

exponent of plainness in speech and habit and was the involuntary cause of a division in New England in 1845 and Ohio in 1854, where "the smaller body" of conservative Friends still exists. The substance of Wilbur's strictures upon the exterior acceptance of the doctrines of the atonement, justification and sanctification is contained in this pregnant passage of his journal: "Instead of submitting to die with Christ and to abide the painful struggle of yielding up the will and wisdom of the flesh, these (innovators) have molded and fashioned to themselves a substitute, by professedly extolling and claiming the faith of Christ's incarnate sufferings and propitiatory sacrifice upon the Cross without the gates of Jerusalem, as the *whole* covenant of salvation, and by Him thus accomplished without them; and, consequently, it is feared they are carnally believing and trusting in this alone for justification, without its essential concomitant, the true obedience of faith and the work of sanctification—wrought within the heart." It can be seen what the important distinction was in the minds of Wilbur and his followers: it is the old danger against which Friends had so often testified in the beginning—the danger of substituting the intellectual acceptance of the meritorious life and death of Christ as an external creed, instead of translating this into a real and personal experience by an inner sanctification of the heart. William Penn had said the same thing in 1696: "As He died *for* sin, so must we die *to* sin, or we cannot be said to be saved by the death and sufferings of Christ, or thoroughly justified and accepted with God." Do we believe that Christ by his sacrifice washed away our sins, or do we believe that like Him we must die to our sins assisted by his grace? There is some difference in the approach

to the problem, even though a saintly life may be produced by either belief.

These two separations and controversies alone attained any great importance in the Society's history in America. The old issues are now being closed: the two Yearly Meetings in Philadelphia live together now in peace and amity; while in New England the centenary of the Wilburite controversy was appropriately celebrated by all in that territory bearing the name of Friends uniting again as New England Yearly Meeting in 1945.

It is time now to complete our picture of nineteenth-century Quakerism in America by turning our attention westward. Under slavery large numbers of Quaker families in North Carolina and Virginia had moved westward into Indiana, Ohio and later into Iowa and Kansas. Due to prolific families North Carolina has still a large Quaker community, but Virginia was drained. Those Friends who migrated faced nearly frontier conditions, and by building meeting-houses have attracted through the years members from other denominations, notably Methodists. They were ready for the Great Revival which marks the years immediately preceding and following the Civil War, both in the west and also in the eastern cities. Some powerful revival preachers developed both inside the Society and out of it. The manifestation of this brand of evangelicalism was the formation of many groups of young people for Bible study and prayer like the Methodist class-meetings, the development of an emotional itinerant ministry, and the holding of frequent revival meetings for the specific purpose of securing sudden conversions. These activities were markedly successful in arousing an "enthusiasm," which was

the last quality we should have found in the conservative Quietism of the preceding century.

The youth was swept by a wide extension of Gurneyism to the employment of methods unthought of by English Friends. Of course, many older and more conservative Friends in the mid-west Meetings were shocked by these emotional and sensational methods. As a consequence, the conservative or Wilburite groups formed separate Yearly Meetings in Kansas, Western, Iowa and Canada, joining thus in a minor league with Ohio and New England Wilburites. The entire Wilburite group took shape between 1845 and 1881. It is thought there are about four thousand Wilburite Friends in this country.

It will be seen now what wide repercussions the evangelical revival in England in the eighteenth century eventually had both in that country and especially in America. What has remained in Philadelphia a more inspiring point of view became in its western march an open and militant approach to Methodism in its exterior expression. The "testimonies" of western Friends have in general remained strictly orthodox. It is the method of worship, with singing, collections, platform and paid pastor which have turned Friends Meeting into Friends Church. As one crosses the country and seeks out Friends in the twenty-eight existent Yearly Meetings, one may come upon a conservative Meeting more plain and conservative than anything in Philadelphia; or one may find himself in a church with stained-glass windows, an organ and all the accessories of a Methodist service. Different conditions and members of different provenance have produced different types of Quakerism. The largest community of Friends is to be found in Indiana within

the limits of the Yearly Meeting which gathers at Richmond. Because of its ancient history, authority and wealth Philadelphia Yearly Meeting at Fourth and Arch Streets still maintains a kind of preëminence and has been referred to as the Canterbury Cathedral of American Quakerism!

During the past four centuries of modern thought in western Europe, various tendencies have absorbed the attention of the majority of men. But there has always been a remnant of seekers for something better and for a more exacting standard than was currently offered. For those who were unsatisfied by the Renaissance joy of living there were the Protestant reformers and always the monastic orders; during the barren theological controversies of the seventeenth century there were little groups of people who sought something more personal in the spiritual reforms they practiced; in the eighteenth the great evangelical movement warmed the hearts of millions who had grown cold under the sway of Reason and Deism; in the nineteenth century science and industry, trade and imperial expansion occupied the best minds without always fully satisfying them; in our own century the same forces are at work, now applied with awful efficiency to the job of international destruction.

Yet, as in the seventeenth century, so today there are still "seekers" for a satisfying and purifying religion, which if widely accepted would save the State. These people have been brought to the point where they ask, "To whom shall we go?" Having learned by experience the insufficiency of all the "Lo here's" and "Lo there's," these are those who are ready like George Fox three centuries ago to hear the Voice which said: "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition."

Without any serious divergence from orthodox Christianity which need detain us, the Quakers have emphasized from the first certain tenets which they feel are implicit in the Christian message. Great numbers of other Christians feel the same way about them. But by the emphasis and importance which they have ascribed to them the Quakers have become in a sense a holding-company for these tenets. The application in life of these tenets is largely responsible for the formerly prevalent idea that the Quakers were a "peculiar people." For if these principles to which so many Christians give lip-service were actually carried out in daily life, Christian society would be transformed, and Christianity would be something more than a thin veneer upon our civilization. These foundation principles are four in number, though in a sense they are all somewhat implicit in the first of them. It is now time to see what these principles are, and what effect their full acceptance would have upon our faith and daily life.

## *The Foundation Tenets of Quakerism*

Quaker mysticism is based on the belief that the spirit of God is within us, and that it is the hope of glory. If it is not in us, it does not make much difference to man where it is. The Light Within, or the Inner Light, or the Inward Light are all Quaker terms for the Christ Immanuel spoken of by other Christians. William Penn called it "the most eminent article of our faith." The early Quakers also meant the same in-dwelling power when they spoke of the Witness or the Seed. What they meant was what George Fox called "that of God" in every man. This phrase, again, has been recently described as that power "which will bring men into an experiential unity with God and through unity with God to unity with their fellow-Christians, if they turn to it and avoid the evil which it shows them."<sup>1</sup> There will evidently be numerous words and numerous definitions applied to a force of which everyone must be aware in himself. But it is simply that power which makes man his "better self"; it is the effective companionship and guidance of the divine beside our human nature; it is life in the upper chamber, where a few people live all the time, but to which most of us mount only occasionally. One feature of this divine and purely spiritual light is that it can be entirely effaced from our attention. We can keep it in a dark lantern with the shutter closed. We can live as if it were not. But it *is*, just the same, and it

<sup>1</sup> R. H. King, *George Fox and the Light Within*, Phila., 1940.



asserts itself occasionally with the most unexpected results.

The difference between conscience and the Light Within is that conscience provides us with a sense of duty originating in human society, while the latter urges upon us a sense of duty which is illumined by absolute standards of right and truth. "Christ is that light which shineth in the conscience," said William Penn. One may give a simple illustration of the difference between the two forces, both of them important: plain conscience is like the red and green lights at an intersection; they have been put there by the police to prevent accidents to society, and in deference to our fellow-men we stop or proceed as the light may indicate. The lights, however, do not tell us where we are or where we are going. The Light Within is rather comparable to the sign-post at an intersection. It tells us where we are, what turn to take, and how many miles it is to our destination. It is a permanent unchanging indicator. Thus, the lights are useful so far as they go, but the sign-post is far more informative, for it tells us what road to select of several which are available, and what will be the result of our choice in attaining our end. An historical illustration is offered by slavery in the last century: millions of good Christians countenanced and defended slavery without a twinge of conscience, because the social conscience in certain places had not advanced beyond it. But now the justice which is shed by the Light Within has carried Christians in America beyond the toleration of human slavery. Thus, it appears that the Light Within furnishes us with an *absolute*, and goes beyond the reach of any mere expediency or opportunism such as often marks the decisions of the social conscience.

It has just been pointed out that one may remain, if

he chooses, perfectly oblivious of this divine light dwelling with him. He can, as it were, put wax in his ears and remain unsmitten by conscience and unilluminated by light. Many people plow right on through life without light and without sign-posts. Only a supreme tragedy is able occasionally to pull them up and force them to seek directions. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble."

An effectual belief in the Light Within taught the Quakers a different technique. They early learned the advantage to themselves and to Truth if they walked in the Light and stayed continuously tuned in with the Voice. They set great store by John's declaration, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."<sup>2</sup> They found that conscience would not trouble them and embitter their days, if they held themselves bound to obey the gentlest indications of duty. They sought, in what was thought a very peculiar way, to subordinate their will always to that of God within them. This is not easy to do for anyone, and the early Quakers thought of life as one long battle between the forces of good and evil within them, and of themselves as the battle-ground. Life so interpreted did not seem to them a gay and lightsome affair. But it seems to us now that Puritans and Quakers alike in their seventeenth-century reaction against the extreme worldliness of the times went further than we are called to go toward grim austerity. Like so much else in primitive Quakerism, its austerity is to be explained by the moral reaction which was then due. There is nothing gloomy about the Quakers of today, nor is there any

<sup>2</sup> I *John* I, 7.

need that there should be. They would not be "proving" anything, were they to go about our streets in drab clothes and with long faces.

It is felt today, and rightly I think, that God-guided lives need no outward advertisement by dress and language. Even those who are most convinced that good and evil are struggling to possess them are capable of the cheeriest and happiest bearing when they live in the perpetual radiance of the Light Within. Like other good soldiers, they have no fear or hesitation, for they know they are led by One who can make no mistake and whose orders they may obey without question. The contentment and confidence that accompany resignation to a will that is higher than ours, but which is revealed to us from time to time, is a matter of personal experience. We can know this contentment experimentally. To Quakers this sort of knowledge has always seemed to afford the most intimate and conclusive assurance.

The Quakers, then, received their spiritual assurance from the Light Within. They read the Bible incessantly, they quoted it on every page of their controversial writings, for they found that it corroborated their own experience. But all the early Friends were careful to distinguish the word of God in the Bible from the Word of God which was Christ. Penn wrote, "We believe the scriptures to contain a declaration of the mind and will of God, in and to those ages in which they were written, being given forth by the Holy Ghost moving in the hearts of holy men of God." He asserted that they ought to be read for instruction and reproof because of the weighty truths they contain. "Yet," he continues, "we do deny them to be the Word of God, ascribing that alone to Christ himself, and that not without scripture

and reason.”<sup>3</sup> This conception of the secondary authority of the Bible, though a cause of difference in the early nineteenth century, has enabled the modern Friend to survive the effects of Biblical criticism without disastrous consequences to his faith. His original estimate placed the scriptures as documents reflecting certain moments in the historical evolution of man’s experience of God. This experience was incomparably important and valuable, but it was not intended to be an unchanging directive for the Christian life. Thus, the New Testament offers a higher revelation of truth than the Old Testament. Further individual revelations of truth might be expected, and they have come. The Inward Light still leads on, undimmed.

But many Christians are still accustomed to make their final reference not to personal experience but to the Bible. To such persons it must be pointed out that the heart of the Quaker faith regarding God in man is contained in the gospel and epistles of St. John, and particularly in the first chapter of each and in chapter XIV–XVII of the gospel. If all else were lost, John’s testimony alone would satisfy the Quaker as corroborative of his own spiritual experience. The Quakers follow St. John’s philosophic interpretation of the identity of God and Christ the Word. They have thought of Christ as coeval with God, the source of light, grace and truth, lighting every man that cometh into the world with the light of life. They have regarded Jesus of Nazareth as God made flesh, to dwell among us and to illustrate the power which makes possible the perfect life of unity with God. Their own sensations of divine presence and love in their hearts, they further account

<sup>3</sup> *Quakerism a New Nickname*, 1672.

for by the promises of Jesus made to his disciples in his final interviews with them: they were to be in Him, and He in them, and all united in God; though He would withdraw in a physical sense, yet his power and love would be made perpetual through the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of those who knew and admitted it; the children of the world would never understand this, but the children of God would understand it and be forever cheered by it; finally, that Jesus died not to satisfy an avenging Father, but as evidence of God's love for the world, that the world through Him might be saved, not *in* sin, but *from* sin. This insistence that man must bear his own share in deserving salvation, and not repose carelessly upon the merits of Another, is characteristic of all early Quakerism and explains the Quaker practice of judging men not by declarations of faith, but by their lives.

We have here in John's gospel, then, the conception of God the Creator and Father of all revealing himself once in the historical Christ and forever in the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Christ Immanuel—"the same yesterday, today and forever." It is upon this third "person" of the triune conception that the Quakers have fastened most tenaciously and most fruitfully. It is this aspect of divinity which they know best. To cultivate and deepen this knowledge they persistently devote themselves. For if one can be conscious of the Real Presence in himself all the time, he is never lonely, nor discouraged, nor in despair. He has "a portable and verifiable religion" of his own, completely satisfactory and dependent upon no other person, organization or event. Of such it may be said that he "shall no longer walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

The realization that there is something of God in every man, whatever his race or color, has important consequences. If a group of people live out these consequences in perfect toleration, they may become "peculiar people" in the eyes of others. For example, such a one does not willingly destroy or even injure what he holds to be sacred. Back of and underlying all other reasons for the Quaker inhibition to take part in war lies the conviction that it entails the destruction of what is sacred. In this sense war is sacrilege. So is murder. So is capital punishment. To kill what is sacred is to assume a role which no man has a right to assume. In a world where Christ's way prevails, there must be some other way than the one currently employed to gain right ends. There are certainly other means for the protection of society than the assumption of a vengeance which it is not ours to take. William Penn, who was not blind to the social and political consequences of his faith, was the ideal Quaker when he made these two remarks bearing on the condemnation of evil in our fellow-men: "Pure religion stands not in accusing and slandering, reviling and persecuting, but in keeping unspotted of the world." <sup>4</sup> And again, "if it be an evil to judge rashly or untruly of any single man, how much a greater sin it is to condemn an whole people." <sup>5</sup>

Another consequence of a belief in the sacredness of human life is Quaker toleration of others' beliefs when sincerely held. No force may be used in compelling compliance with another's political, social or religious conscience. "Conscience is God's throne in man, and the power of it his prerogative," said Penn in one of his

<sup>4</sup> *A Brief Answer to a False and Foolish Libel*, 1678.

<sup>5</sup> *A Key Opening the Way etc.*, 1692.

noblest utterances. As is so often said, "a man has a right to his own opinions" so long as they are not inimical to social welfare. The Quaker faith in the reasonableness of man when left to himself has on certain occasions been put to what seemed at the time to be a very severe test. More than once the world has decided that the Quaker faith was unjustified, and the world has taken things into its own hands. It is true that the happy effects of toleration are sometimes long postponed. But it would be rash to maintain that because these effects have not always been at once manifested, therefore they have not been worth waiting for. The dividends of toleration are cumulative and preferred.

Thus, though the Quakers belong historically to the Puritan movement by their disparagement of the world's charms, they are at the opposite pole from the Presbyterians in their manner of conducting the fight against sin. The Quaker exercises silent pressure against the evil he sees about him; the Puritan takes up carnal weapons against the devil and all his works. The Puritan sings "Christian, up and smite them," while the Quaker does not sing at all. The Quaker's motto is "Just push, don't shove": he uses his weight, but not his hands. He believes that evil can be overcome with good, and he trusts the results to God's will. Coals of fire, if well laid on the head of one's opponent, will eventually make him uncomfortable.

The second principle to which the Quakers have clung from the first is "the universality of grace." This phrase has a theological sound, but in reality it refers to an experience which is common to us all. Universal grace is opposed to "limited grace" as held by Calvin and for a long while by members of the communions

which go back to him for their guidance. Of all the many senses in which the word "grace" is used in the Bible, there is one which is very simple: grace is the effective power freely granted by God to every man to resist evil and to do good. This power may be used or it may not, but it is there to be used by him who will. The Calvinists once held that through some inscrutable divine plan certain persons possessed this power, while the majority did not. Those who possessed it were called the elect, the saints, who were predestined to salvation. This interpretation was attributed by the Calvinists to St. Paul in several passages. From the first this interpretation was rejected by the Quakers. To them such a plan seemed both unreasonable and unjust in a loving God who desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he shall turn from his wickedness and live. The Quakers feel that if all men are sons of God and brothers one of another, then none is excluded from the beneficent grace which enables man to make the necessary choice between good and evil and to implement this choice by corresponding action. It is the full use of this availing grace which leads to salvation. To exclude any from the provisions of such mercy is an unacceptable conception of grace.

The question arises as to what Biblical authority there is for this more generous and inclusive dispensation of grace. The text upon which the Friends pitched with full confidence in its validity is in *Titus* II, 11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." There we have the text for the benefit of those who seek an external authority for the dispensation of grace.



The Quakers made great use of the text just quoted in their early polemics against those who were believers in limited grace. But their own conviction regarding universality was based on their own experience with human nature. What they knew experimentally was that if you treat another decently, he will respond by similar treatment. This reciprocity they believed to be quite independent of Christianity itself. In fact, because of its consequences in human conduct, this universality of grace is far more important than the mere theological aspect of the familiar phrase would indicate. It means that in dealing with other people, of whatever race or cultural background, we can count upon a natural reaction in which like begets like. The Friends called this trust "answering to the witness of God in every man." Early Quaker literature is full of the belief that if you approach a man with love, justice and confidence, he will reply in kind.

The most familiar example in Quaker history of this belief is furnished by William Penn's treatment of the Indians. Penn knew nothing about the Indians from personal experience when he addressed to them from England his famous missives of good will and trust. But he knew all about the doctrine of universal grace. He was simply applying a Quaker principle to a practical situation. The principle proved valid in Pennsylvania for nearly seventy-five years, and in Rhode Island, New Jersey and the Carolinas for shorter periods under Quaker control. The personal and implicit trust of the Indians in the word of Penn has survived traditionally among the scattered tribes for over two centuries. That record is quite different from the experience of some other colonies with the Red Men. It is one more example of a fact so often remarked that the experience of

the Quakers with other peoples has been singularly happy and has resulted in practical advantages to both sides. We all know in our personal experience that to treat another decently offers the surest guarantee of being treated decently ourselves. This is just as true when dealing with Indians, Negroes and Chinese as it is in dealing with those apparently like ourselves. In this respect all human beings are alike.

The Friends have made a universal principle out of universal grace, while the world has feared to trust it on a large scale. To other American colonists the only good Indian was a dead Indian. To the Quakers an Indian could be invited to a council, the peace-pipe could be shared, and business to mutual advantage could be done. That the Indians, or other native peoples whom Quaker travelers and missionaries have from time to time encountered, knew nothing of the Christian plan of salvation was not to be held against them. All people believe in a Great Spirit and have the equivalent of what we call the promptings of conscience. Unless they have already been made suspicious by unkind treatment, they will respond to good will. Grace, then, in this Quaker sense simply means the ability to practice the Golden Rule. But you cannot practice this rule with reservations. You have to go for it "all out." You cannot go into an interview with Indians or anyone else flourishing a big stick or with a loaded pistol in your pocket. You have to possess grace and expect it in others.

Thus, what promised to be but a theological phrase has been found to have extensive application. In it we have the explanation of the Quakers' attitude toward slavery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the reason for their missionary and humanitarian under-

takings, and the modern relations between Quaker employers and their employees, whether in the factories and shops or in the kitchen of the private house. To hold and practice this faith in universal grace is to believe in cooperation and consultation, in mutual trust and confidence. It defeats any sense of natural superiority, and begets a sense of responsibility for the welfare of others because "all we are brethren." What the effect of this principle would be if applied to international relations can only be surmised. It has never been tried long enough or sincerely enough to prove anything. St. Paul thought so highly of it that he began and ended every surviving epistle by commending his correspondents to the beneficent effects of grace. The Quakers, for their part, are ready to trust the principle as fundamentally and eternally valid. When a God-illumined conscience is at work on a problem or a situation, "quiet calm deliberation disentangles every knot."

What has just been said about grace appearing to all men derives, of course, from the belief in that of God in every man. The Quakers believe in these two principles experimentally, but they also believe that the faith is buttressed by scriptural authority. In the seventeenth-century theological debates every point had to be proved by a reference to this scriptural authority. In our day the belief based on personal experience is probably more persuasive. In any case, these two principles are those which have dictated for three centuries the conduct of Quakers towards other people both individually and collectively. They form the charter of their social attitudes. The next two principles which we shall now take up concern the individual Christian exclusively—his standards of personal conduct, his sense of obligation, and

lastly his feeling of cooperation with the divine will in the world today.

The third principle, then, in which the Quakers have believed is that we are called to perfection. They can see no reason for artificially fixing a modest goal for their endeavors and comforting themselves with the reflection that no more is expected of them. In this respect they are struggling against human nature. For man has been quick to be satisfied with a very modest attainment in his search for perfection. It is always very easy to say to oneself: "I have done all that can be expected of me, and angels could do no more."

Someone will be quick to point out that absolute moral perfection is impossible of attainment. That is true, and the Quakers admit it. They are by no means a "Holiness" sect. They do not claim ever to have attained, but they press on in an effort to perfect society as well as the individual. They contend that Christ said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," which high injunction sets no limit upon our effort. Nor does St. Paul entertain any doubt about our obligation in this direction: "called to be saints," "for the perfecting of the saints," and other familiar expressions make clear his preoccupation with perfection. No, none of us will be perfect, but we are bound to try to be perfect, and that is what counts. He who in a class strives for a perfect mark will prepare his work and write a better examination than he who proclaims that he cares nothing for the subject and will be satisfied with a merely passing grade.

As a matter of fact, for us to decide of our own motion that only a limited effort is required of us is illogical and indefensible. It is like saying that, though 100 is the recognized mark of perfection, 60 is all that will be re-

quired of *us*. We make that decision for ourselves because it is less exacting. But it is unwarranted. It is interesting to observe that we are incensed at the sight of others setting a higher standard for themselves than we do. It seems to us presumptuous in them, as if they were setting themselves up to be better than other people. It has doubtless always been so. George Fox observed of his Christian contemporaries: "The professors were in a rage, all pleading for sin and imperfection, and could not endure to hear talk of perfection, and of a holy and sinless life." \* Certainly, there must have been many pleasure-lovers under the Restoration who did not wish to be reminded of their own shortcomings by the lives of others.

This belief that nothing should be done which we know ought to be left undone, and that everything should be done which we know it is right to do, has had a profound effect upon the Society of Friends. In its negative aspect, the result has been to restrain Quakers from many pursuits, businesses and recreations which they feel interfere with their soul's welfare. In order that they may keep their fellow-members up to a high standard, they address to their Meetings Queries regarding the nature and conduct of their business, the treatment of their associates, the use of intoxicants and narcotics, the choice of reading and recreations, and many other matters about which the average Christian feels little concern and which he asserts are no one's business but his own. The Quaker corporate concern for the guidance of their members is, however, so sincere and sustained that resentment is rarely felt for this kindly control.

The result is that many activities in which other

\* *Journal I*, p. 19.

Christians feel free to engage have been ruled out of a Quaker's life. A modern Quaker will not be found in the liquor business, for example; nor will he gamble at cards or bingo or on the stock-market; nor will he own a movie theatre or patronize one to excess; he will not own or bet on race-horses. For the same reason Friends take no part in lotteries, raffles or any community scheme for raising money by offering "chances." If you want a Quaker's contribution for a good cause, don't throw out any bait, but ask him for what you want face to face. In former times the Quaker taboo, like that of the Puritans, extended to dancing, card-playing, the theatre, music and frivolous reading on the ground that all these occupations were a waste of precious time which should be spent in preparing for the soul's eternal welfare. As Penn said, "We cannot, we dare not, square our conversation by the world's: no, but by our plainness and moderation to testify against such extravagant vanities, and by our grave and steady life to manifest our dislike, on God's behalf, to such intemperate and wanton curiosity; yea, to deny ourselves what otherwise perhaps we lawfully could use with a just indifference, if not satisfaction, because of its use among the generality." <sup>7</sup> Conventional politeness even was felt to be hypocritical, and conventional attire a vain extravagance. This extreme negative attitude is historically explained as a rebuke of the license, insincerity and immorality of the Restoration in England. But the effect lasted long, and only recently have Friends yielded to a more liberal interpretation of recreation. Their basic concern for perfection should instruct them, however, that there is a place to stop in the liberalizing process.

<sup>7</sup> *No Cross, No Crown.*

We must not stop, however, with the merely negative results of this cult of perfection. With reason the world has been more interested in and influenced by its affirmative effects. From the earliest times the Quaker conscience has been troubled by the existence of anything which it came to feel was wrong. To use phrases with which we are already familiar, let us say that when the Light Within made clear to the Quaker conscience that something was morally wrong, a powerful motive was created to right it. When Truth was revealed to the seeking soul, grace was vouchsafed to follow the gleam. It is this moral urge of the Society which has most aroused the curiosity of the world. But from the time of the Perrot controversy and the Wilkinson-Story schism, referred to on page 28, it has been recognized that the concern of a single individual is not valid until approved and shared by the group. One person may be the victim of an hallucination, he may be misguided or have an obsession. But when his concern is tried and united with by the Meeting, a concerted push gradually begins and is seldom proved to be mistaken or defeated.

Dr. Howard H. Brinton has recently made clear how the concern of an individual may take hold of the larger group: "An individual, alone in inward retirement or sitting in silence in a meeting and endeavoring to expose his soul to the Light of the Divine Presence, finds in that Light a shadow cast by evil. This may be a social condition which requires remedy. He presents his concern to the Monthly Meeting which, if it agrees, may help him to find the cure. If the matter requires a greater backing than the Monthly Meeting can give it, the Monthly Meeting forwards the concern to the Quarterly Meeting, and there, if the Quarterly Meeting

agrees, and the matter requires still greater support, it is forwarded to the Yearly Meeting. Even there it may not stop, for if the concern is of national or international significance the Yearly Meeting may present it to other Yearly Meetings or to other organizations. Thus the single strength of a lone individual is multiplied until adequate power is attained.”<sup>8</sup>

In the search for perfection we have the secret of Quaker activities for the betterment of society. The method is slow, for it sometimes requires the group to be won over by an individual. But it has proved a singularly fruitful method in the attainment of social reforms and improvements—always looking towards perfection. Thus we may explain the Quaker share in the anti-slavery movement and in the campaign for the equal rights for women; in the maintenance of one price for merchandise; in the moral emphasis in education; in temperance; in the peaceful settlement of disputes including those of labor and capital; in the treatment of prisoners, the insane and war victims—in all of which fields the Quakers have pioneered.

These concerns for human betterment are not the fruits of a nervous creaturely activity, for as seen from the outside Friends move very slowly and deliberately. They are the fruits of a highly sensitive social conscience on the part of a group of Christians who have perfection always in mind as a goal. Again, if we seek a scriptural warrant for their attitude, it may be found in the same passage in *Titus*, to the first part of which we have already referred. In the 13th verse of the second chapter the Apostle names our Savior Jesus Christ as the one “who gave himself for us, that he might

<sup>8</sup> *The Meeting and Its Community*, 1945.



redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." These words suggest no partial purification or limited responsibility. The words used are *all* and *purify*—both absolutes. There is no loop-hole through which to squirm. This whole passage in *Titus* was early recognized as a sort of charter of Quakerism, and it still remains today the most perfect single statement of the Quaker faith and program. The expression "peculiar people," once willingly admitted by the Friends as a description of them, comes from this passage. And the zeal for "good works" has stayed right with the Society until the American Friends Service Committee was formed in 1917.

The preceding paragraph was written before finding in the Journal of Joseph Hoag (1762–1846) the description of a debate between this Quaker traveling minister and an unidentified Presbyterian deacon at Unadilla, N. Y. It was at the close of a public meeting for worship in the early nineteenth century, at a time when the religious public was still interested in theological points of doctrine. It happens that this discussion touches upon two of the characteristics of Quakerism which we are here presenting—the universality of grace and the obligation to seek perfection. But here is Joseph Hoag's account of the encounter:

"In Unadilla, I was attacked by a Presbyterian deacon almost as soon as I sat down after speaking, who tried hard to get into an argument; but believing, as I did, that not much good would come of it, I endeavored to bring the business to short, plain work. After a little altercation, I brought him to agree, that what doctrines could not be proved by Scripture, should be rejected. He strove to open the subject of unconditional election, but

I thought it not best, as we had been favored with a good meeting, and the minds of the people appeared to be sober. I asked him 'By what are we to be saved, by works?' He answered 'No.' I then said, 'Are we saved by faith alone?' He answered 'No.' I then queried, 'By what are we saved? Is it not by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves?' He said, 'Yes.' I then continued, 'The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto *all* men, the Apostle tells us; and there could be no more in number than *all*, therefore there were none overlooked. This grace did not appear as an outward object to the natural eye, but in man, in its own power and manifestation.' To all this he agreed. I then observed, 'If it appeared in man, it was certainly put in his reach, and he could lay hold of it; and thou wilt not deny but what the grace of God is over all the power of the devil.' He answered, 'It is.' I then remarked, 'If this, as thou acknowledgest, is in all mankind, to lay hold of, and believe in, it will teach them the same thing,—to deny all ungodliness and the world's lusts, to live soberly and to do right in all things; so that thou seest we should all be engaged in one concern, eyeing the one thing, walking by the same rule, then what room would there be for disunion among the people, or occasion for disputes?' This so confused the deacon, that he stood silent for some time. The people all sat quietly until the subject was brought to a close, when several spoke to this effect: 'The stranger reasons fairly—it is good sound doctrine, and you ought not to press it upon him.' Thus it ended, and I was truly glad to get through, without having the people's minds jostled or drawn from under the solemnity that was over the meeting, which was the object I aimed at, and through mercy obtained. It is not

desirable after a solid meeting, to get into a discussion upon what has been said, but many artful sectarians will seek to do it, I have thought purposely to divert the attention of the people from what they have heard."

Finally, Friends believe in a continuing revelation. William Penn<sup>9</sup> once wrote: "We assert not a revelation of new things, but renewed revelation of those things God made former ages witnesses of; otherwise, men are no more benefited by them." <sup>9</sup> This belief grows, of course, out of the belief in the divine element in every man, and is very close to it. What is divine survives. The belief may have an immediate and practical value as a guide of life. To believe in a continuing revelation is to feel oneself part of a continuous unfolding of divine Truth, an integral part of an inclusive plan. Friends believe in divine guidance, in divine leadings in all the affairs of life. The experience of all the great Quaker figures in history proves the fact. A notable example of trust in such guidance is found in the sixty active years of missionary effort of Stephen Grellet (1773-1855), to whose life the reader may be referred. But there are many men today who proceed on the same principle. Almost instinctively Friends practice the surrender of themselves to guidance in their daily affairs. Probably more than other Christians, they are wont to say, "I don't feel quite comfortable about doing that," "I believe it would be right for me to do so and so," "I shall do so if the way opens," and many other expressions which indicate tenderness and sensitiveness to the leadings of a God-illuminated conscience.

In holding this doctrine of continuing revelation the Quakers feel that they have hold of universal and eternal

<sup>9</sup> *Quakerism a New Nickname for Old Christianity.*

Truth: the same yesterday, today and forever. Man is not left to flounder blindly along the pathway of life. It seems incredible that God has no plain and specific guidance available for us in our day. It is equally incredible that the stupendous claims which Jesus asserted, the exceeding great and precious promises which He made, were delivered exclusively to a small group of unlearned men and that their validity was limited to the brief and incomplete experience of these men. Did He expect that for all the ages of the future men would look back across the centuries with nostalgic yearning to that short life in Palestine, and feel that they are excluded from the personal experiences enjoyed by those fortunate few who shared in his ministry? That is what a great number of Christians have felt and do feel. By every art men have tried to solemnize their worship and rekindle a faith of which, in their thinking, the substance passed away into the heavens nineteen centuries ago. Such a faith is purely objective, confined to a belief in the historical Christ, and for those who hold it the participation of Christ in human affairs terminated with the tragedy of the cross. The birth, the crucifixion, the resurrection of the body and the ascension into heaven have absorbed the attention of Christianity for centuries. Painting, sculpture and music have concentrated on these aspects of divinity become human. Christ ascended on high and, seated at the right hand of the throne of God, presents a majestic image. But He is thus aloof from our life in the marketplace. For those who think of Him only thus, the sun of faith has gone down and only a pale glow still lingers in the western sky. It all happened so long ago that it does not seem very real. It will soon be quite dark and we shall be left alone. Of such a

historical faith it is often said that it will not work now, that conditions have changed, and that what He said has no application to men of the modern world. This is what may happen to a faith that is purely objective and confined to an intellectual belief in the life and death of the historical Christ.

The Quaker contribution to thought on this subject comes in at this point. The Friends have never confined their interest in Christ to his earthly life and death. They hold that his nature was too divine, his teaching too precious, and the meaning of his sacrifice too far-reaching to be confined by the limits of place and time. Nor do they think of him as being seated somewhere in the firmament contemplating struggling humanity with either pity or wrath. What they *do* believe is quoted by William Penn from a more obscure Friend in a classic expression: "If you confine Christ's body to a local heaven, you are ignorant of that which is the greatest joy that can be. Christ dwells in the heart."

The significance of this conception as a fixed accompaniment of our thought can hardly be mistaken. Strictly speaking, when Friends sing the words of Phillips Brooks' beautiful invitation:

Oh, come to us, abide with us  
Our Christ Emmanuel,

they would make one slight alteration: there is no need for the Christ Immanuel to come from anywhere, for He is here already, always "Christ in you the hope of glory," as St. Paul says. The man who believes that he is the temple of the living God is more likely to conduct himself in a manner befitting such a divinity than a man

who goes once a week to pay lip-service to an absentee landlord. The latter is soon through with a service often felt to be fruitless and onerous; the former would fain render his temple service a life-absorbing effort—a tribute which the human gladly pays to the divine.

We are speaking of mysteries and adequate language fails us: we must speak in figures which are by no means proper. But we are happy if we can find it reasonable to believe in a Christ who promised to be with us as intimately as he was with his personal friends and to do for us all that he did for them. For, as Isaac Penington said, "That which recovers man is the eternal virtue, the endless power, the life immortal, the Christ of God." Belief in this virtue, power and life immortal is not the result of intellectual acquisition, but like all that is best in Quakerism, the result of experience. Friends have believed like Fox in knowing Jesus experimentally, for from the experience of Christ in the heart, there is no appeal.

There will be those who apprehend that this sense of possession of Christ in the heart is the result of a kind of auto-suggestion. They may ask for scriptural authority for any such continuing revelation as we have claimed. The answer is largely in the evidence of St. John and St. Paul, two of the witnesses of Truth who were most impressed by our oneness with Christ and by his continuing solicitude for all those who are his friends and disciples. The fourteenth to the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel may be read with this in mind. As the time of his departure drew near, Jesus gave everything he had for the encouragement of those he was about to leave in the flesh: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever;

even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more, but ye see me; because I live ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." And in our Lord's last prayer: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." And finally, St. John's further testimony: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." <sup>10</sup> Friends are conscious experimentally of Christ being in them, Immanuel, but the Scriptures give abundant proof that the first generations of Christians conceived of Christ in the same way and have left their record as corroborative evidence.

Perhaps the significant fact attaching to a belief in a continuing revelation would be for some the courage that comes from an optimistic outlook. If one believes only in a "closed revelation," the initial impulse after nineteen centuries may have grown weak. But there is something stirring in the belief that one may still learn at firsthand what is God's will for him—that further revelation will be vouchsafed as man is able and willing to receive it. The belief inevitably leads to the doctrine

<sup>10</sup> I *John*, III, 13.

of perfectibility, which holds that, however slow the process and however many the setbacks, humanity is nevertheless progressing toward the higher destiny to which it is called. In other words, the Kingdom of Heaven will be realized on earth in accordance with the prayers of mankind. If this is the far-away goal towards which we are working, then the contribution of the individual takes on significance, and he may feel a thrilling sense of collaboration with eternal forces.

In thinking of the possibility of cooperating with God in the accomplishment of the divine purposes, we may think of ourselves as his sole agents. He works through man alone. The rest of his creation appears to have no moral or spiritual role. Man alone represents God on earth. God's messages, his examples, his lessons, his rewards and punishments come to us through human carriers. It is a solemn and yet bracing thought that we can represent God, that men may come to glorify God because they see Him in our good works. Thus we may have the privilege of interpreting God, of illustrating Him, of being his ambassadors, of representing Him who is Spirit in us who are flesh. There is apparently no other channel through which He has chosen to be known. In the business world a firm is honored to be chosen as the sole agent in a given territory for some nation-wide product. Such a firm is zealous to maintain its integrity and reputation for fair dealing; it strives to increase the use of the product within its territory; and it joins periodically in conference with other agents to consider how the interests of the parent company can be fostered, and how prospective patrons may be favorably impressed. Those who believe that they may receive as sole agents an authentic divine directive have a personal



share in bringing in the Kingdom of God. The realization of this intimate partnership and responsibility is enough to give new brilliance to the most drab of lives.

In the absence of any fundamental difference which distinguishes Quakers from other Protestant communions, it has now been shown what factors of stress and emphasis have made the Society of Friends what it has been and what it potentially is today. Perhaps it is clearer now that the Quakers do not claim to constitute a "Church" in the ordinary sense of that word. To most people a denominational "Church" connotes the existence of some sort of hierarchy, synod or conference from which authority derives. The Friends do not have any popes, bishops or other clergy ordained in apostolic succession by the authority of man. To many Christians this lack would seem a serious weakness. We shall see what they *do* have in the way of authority, but we shall also see how great independence and latitude of thought and action is extended to individuals and to the individual Monthly Meetings which form the unit in the Quaker organization.

There are so few Quakers in the world that in many localities it is not easy to come by an opportunity to share in their worship or observe their manner of life. Their worship and their manner of life leave a great deal to be desired in some respects because of lack of faithfulness and consecration. But the ideal which dominated the early life of the Society is so fraught with possibilities to the advantage of the individual and of mankind at large that other Christians have displayed curiosity concerning it. Attempts to describe this ideal can no longer be made in the language which was once thought suited to the subject. New words and perhaps new methods

must be employed in these days to reach the Seekers of the twentieth century.

If one reviews the principles just set forth, it will become evident that the over-all tendency of Quakerism is to enhance the dignity and value of human life by associating it directly with the Source of all life and goodness. The methods it employed at the outset to establish this dignity and value were dictated by the insufficiency of contemporary Christianity in England. It was at first a militant evangelical religious Society. It undertook to fill a gaping void, a lack in the man-made version of Christianity which it saw about it. Christianity three centuries ago was cold, formal, ritualistic, emphasizing faith over works. Milton scathingly denounced its insincerity and hypocrisy. So did George Fox and many other Separatists who saw its defects. The conditions of the times explain why the Quakers in their reaction went so far towards the simplicity of faith and life which has ever since been associated with them in the popular mind. Some of this simplicity and plainness is now out of date. To persist in it would be to attract attention and thus defeat its very purpose. But in their four essentials previously outlined the Quakers are recognized to "have something." For this "something" to which they have clung with a good measure of fidelity other Christians today honor them. For certain precious truths the Friends have been a sort of holding company, from which other Christians have withdrawn certain deposits. Indeed, it has been felt by some that the mission of the Quakers lay just here: perhaps, not by increasing their own numbers, but by quiet influence upon other highly organized churches, their genius could best manifest itself. It is true that more than other small religious groups

they have affected Christian thought and practice. They have seemed to be a deliberate remnant.

I cannot share this denial of other responsibility. If the Quakers have something that other Christians are seeking, they must be willing and able to show it forth,—to illustrate it by their lives. It is true that the Quakers have not been a proselyting group, if search for members of their Society is meant. Nor should their Society now force itself upon the Christian world by any spectacular methods. But to offer its spiritual resources to those who seek them is eminently proper, and indeed necessary if the Quaker influence is to persist in the world. To do this, the Quakers should have the man-power to channel the God-power where and when it is wanted. This God-power is needed now the world over. The Quakers should gird themselves to act as human agents of the divine under divine guidance.

In what follows, we shall see Quakerism as it is today: its organization, its institutions and its methods of work. We shall show its notable weakness as well as the beauty of its theory, its shortcomings as well as its strength and success. It will never appeal to great numbers of Americans, but it could appeal to many more than now find themselves in the Society.

A columnist writing on Washington's Birthday, 1945, said: "No nation on the threshold of world victory could possibly be believed to be as discouraged, disheartened and confused as I find the people down this Atlantic seaboard. A cold despair covers all walks and classes, all creeds and colors. No one anywhere seems to hope. Disillusioned particularly are the youths with whom I have talked, including youths in the service, and the wives and families of service men, some of whom have lost

their family heads in battle. They rather generally report of their own class; 'We are becoming a lost generation, without much faith of any kind or morals. How can it be otherwise? What is there to tie to?' " <sup>11</sup> Of course, it is spiritual food such people need. In the days we are living through now, no spiritual help should be withheld from any who are seeking it.

It has been said that the Society of Friends constitutes a very small branch of the Christian Church. There are perhaps 115,000 members in America, 160,000 in the whole world. And many of these are paper members only, one-talent men whose talent is kept in a paper napkin. In America the Society, constituting not one-tenth of one per cent of the population, is better known than ever before and probably now more favorably known than it deserves to be. But its continued existence is precarious. Its own power of reproduction has long proved unequal to the task of replacement. It must depend upon the adherence of those who come to share the distinguishing principles of the Society by "convincement" and throw in their lot with it. That such an accretion from outside the present membership is vital is well known to concerned members of the Society. A friendly welcome awaits everywhere those who seek the Christian fellowship of people who so long have called themselves "Friends."

<sup>11</sup> Philadelphia *Inquirer*, February 23, 1945. Reprinted by permission of King Features Syndicate, Inc.

## *Friends Meetings for Business and Worship*

We have now seen something of the historical background against which present-day Quakerism in America may be considered. Modern Friends no longer claim that their Quakerism bears the hall-mark of primitive Christianity or that it is an answer to all types of religious demands and is destined to cover the earth. That much must be admitted. But it is also evident that Quakerism *does* appeal as a satisfactory religious philosophy to certain individuals of every tribe and tongue. It has proved to be as valid in India, China and Japan as it is in Europe and America. It is in fact an international fellowship and has world possibilities. It appears psychologically sound to all sorts and conditions of men.

The three features of any religion which concern us are its faith, its manner of worship and its practice in the affairs of life. We have seen what the Quaker faith is. It is time to see how the Quakers worship, for the spirit of this worship will be the point at which their attracting power will be largely exerted upon others.

When anyone becomes interested in the Society of Friends he naturally reads about Quakerism and attends meetings for worship for some length of time. If he is attracted by what he sees and hears, it will be for one or both of two reasons: he is helped by the Quaker manner of worship, or he wishes to have a part in what the Quakers are doing. His application for membership in

the Society may be addressed to the Clerk of the Monthly Meeting which is nearest his place of residence, and should contain a convincing statement of the reasons for his action. He will then be visited by a committee who will further discuss his situation, and if their report to the Meeting is satisfactory, he will be informed that his application has been accepted. The visiting committee should be assured that his reasons are valid, that his knowledge of the Society is adequate, that he expects to attend regularly meetings for worship and business, and that he will contribute towards the financial support of the congregation and its works. What he will find after joining the Society may now be described.

The Monthly Meeting is the unit in the Society's organization. It is made up of one or more Meetings in a neighborhood. In the conduct of its meetings for worship, it is completely independent. If more than one constituent Meeting is concerned, each one has its own meeting for worship on First Day and also perhaps upon some week-day. As the name implies, the Monthly Meeting convenes for business and a short period of worship once a month. Each Monthly Meeting has its own list of members to keep up to date, its births, deaths and marriages to record, its funds and real property to care for, its committees to appoint and hear, its various good works to maintain and encourage, the annual queries on the spiritual welfare and state of the Meeting to consider, and its representatives to the superior Meeting to appoint.

The superior Meeting is the Quarterly Meeting assembling four times a year and consisting of several Monthly Meetings. It also may hold and disburse funds of its own, "record" ministers and elders upon recom-

mendation of a Monthly Meeting, and endorse traveling minutes for ministers going abroad upon the same recommendation. The Quarterly Meetings also summarize in turn the pertinent business and recommendations regarding the discipline of the Society to be forwarded to the Yearly Meeting.

The Yearly Meeting includes a larger territory and is comparable with a diocese in the episcopal system. In the United States and Canada there are twenty-eight such Yearly Meetings, pretty well scattered over the country except in the Gulf States where there are few Friends. Sessions of these Yearly Meetings last several days and attract large numbers of Friends, both official representatives from the Quarterly Meetings and many others. Some of these Yearly Meetings are quite independent, others are members of still larger groups with which they are affiliated in faith and practice. In any case, their business is to consider the state of the Society, to maintain a spiritual correspondence with other groups of Friends all over the world, to hear and consider reports of many standing committees on publications, education, the social order, missions, peace, charities and national legislation, to allocate income of trust funds, to pass on business of general interest to the Society, and issue directives and recommendations on many matters including discipline to the subordinate Meetings.

This interlocking organization provides that every individual Friend is a member of a Quarterly Meeting and a Yearly Meeting by virtue of his membership in the Monthly Meeting of his residence. In this manner his interest is logically extended from his local affiliation until it includes the whole world. Friends have thus no

excuse if they remain parochial. Their thought and interest should be worldwide. This concentric system of membership, in which every member can feel his privilege and responsibility as a small fraction of a large whole, is unique. The smoothness of its operation over nearly three hundred years explains in good measure the survival and strength of the Society.

The organization and interrelation of Meetings is as just described in all parts of the world. But when we come to the manner of worship, we must distinguish between worship under an unprogrammed and "free ministry" on the one hand, and that under a paid pastor who leads the service on the other. The latter has been referred to on pages 60-61, and is characteristic of many Meetings affiliated with the Five Years Meeting. But the historic unprogrammed meeting for worship prevails among Friends everywhere in the world except in parts of America, and as the opportunity for silence and a free ministry is finding favor in all the new Quaker centers, we may here confine ourselves to a consideration of the merits and dangers of such worship.

All worship is an effort of the individual to realize in himself the Real Presence of the Divine. The meeting for worship is of course the power-house of everything Quakerism has accomplished. The manner of Quaker worship is the very opposite extreme of the highly ceremonial and symbolic worship of the Roman Catholic, Jewish and High Church Episcopal service. There can be no question of the value of such ceremonial features upon the sensitive worshiper. But nearly three centuries ago a Quaker wrote: "Now consider what is the cause of this great difference between us and the Professors [i.e., other professing Christians]: certainly it is about wor-



shipping God.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, all forms of Protestant worship are in an intermediary category between Catholicism and Quakerism. It is evident that Quaker worship is strictly subjective and places no dependence upon the vicarious offices of any human ministrant. Its demands upon the individual worshiper are very great and are perhaps seldom completely met. But the possibility of a mystical union with the Divine during the hour of worship is constantly present, and for it every Quaker feels free to strive.

The meeting gathers and “centers down” when all have entered quietly and taken their seats. In many places there is a platform, and in some merely an informal circle of chairs. But in the old meeting-houses there is always a facing gallery of seats in which Ministers and Elders may sit. This does not give the latter any special authority, but Ministers are usually invited to sit facing the congregation in order that they may be better heard, and the Elders sit there as a symbol of their care of the ministry. Ministers, Elders and Overseers are all appointed in open business meeting by the other members and by acclamation, not by counted votes. The two former groups must be confirmed by the Quarterly Meeting and usually serve in their respective positions for life, and their age, experience and wisdom receive a tacit respect from their fellow-members. But neither they nor anyone else has any *ex officio* authority: the control is completely democratic and is at all times in the hands of the united membership.

After the meeting has “centered down” in the silence, some stranger may have the happy experience of Robert Barclay the Apologist (1648–1690) who, as already

<sup>1</sup> Henry Stout in William Penn, *Judas and the Jews*.

quoted, testified: "When I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them, and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me, and the good raised up." Isaac Penington's wife confessed after the first meeting for worship in their home at Chalfont: "This is what I have longed and waited for, and feared I never should have experienced." There may be uttered prayer, exhortation or spiritual edification by one or several participants in the company. Here men and women have an equal responsibility. In some Meetings there is provision for a pastor to assume the leadership in these exercises; in others the entire hour is unplanned and the exercises are those arising from the inspiration of the moment. The high degree of spiritual unity which may be attained in silence will be intelligible to those who have had experience in such occasions. It is often discovered that one's mind has been engaged in meditation upon precisely the same subject or even the same verse of Scripture as the one to which utterance is given by someone else in the group.

A Quaker meeting-house will be found within reach of many communities in New England, in the Middle States, and at longer intervals in many other parts of the Central and Western States. Some meeting-houses are in the cities and others in rural sites, convenient centers for a more scattered population. A notice-board will often be found to announce the hour of First Day and mid-week meetings for worship. This is important, for no bell will ring to summon the congregation, and only in a few large cities do the newspapers carry any mention of Friends Meetings among their religious announcements. But at the appointed hour Friends will be seen to arrive on foot and by car.

The typical meeting-houses vary in size, but are uni-

formly of plain architecture. Many in the East are very old. Inside will be found nothing but benches or forms facing a low gallery where some of the older and more responsible members of both sexes may sit. There is no organ, no choir, no baptismal font, no stained glass, no pulpit, no altar. There is no doxology, no guarantee of a sermon or supplication, no collection and no benediction. One may well wonder, then, what there is. How is one to know when such a strange manner of worship is to begin? It begins when one has taken his seat, or better it begins at home before coming to meeting by composing one's mind in advance for the most solemn exercise of which the mind of man is capable—the effective worship of Almighty God.

When the company has assembled and “centered down,” a solemn silence ensues during which the sensitive soul may become conscious of a part in the united uplift of the human to the divine. To Charles Lamb it seemed that even “the Abbey Church of Westminster hath nothing so solemn, so spirit-soothing, as the naked walls and benches of a Quaker Meeting.” Another Presence is felt beside that of the silent Friends. As eyes are closed or cast down to shut out any distraction of the wayward spirit, other realities will be found to replace physical sensations. Praise, thanksgiving, confession, repentance, prayer for oneself and for others may alternately engage the worshiper. And then unannounced and unpaid, someone will rise and offer a message of hope, encouragement, gratitude or exhortation, as the case may be. During the hour several such exercises and spoken petitions may emerge from the group, as response is made in the living silence to the divine call. The most acceptable spiritual activity is based on the utterance and development of some familiar Scripture, followed

and completed by other speakers. In this way a single and unified exercise pervades the meeting and leaves a definite impression. The power and reality of united silent worship is proved by the frequent experience of hearing one's own thoughts and preoccupations precisely expressed by the one who first breaks the silence and indicates the course which will be taken by the meeting's thought.

The mystical nature of this group worship is well expressed by a beloved minister, the late Thomas R. Kelly: "In a truly covered meeting an individual who speaks takes no credit to himself for the part he played in the unfolding of the worship. In fact he deeply regrets it if anyone, after the service, speaks in complimentary fashion to *him*. For the feeling of being a pliant instrument of the Divine Will characterizes true speaking 'in the Life.' Under such a covering an individual emerges into vocal utterance, frequently without fear and trembling, and subsides without self-consciousness into silence when his part is played. For One who is greater than all individuals has become the meeting-place of the group, and He becomes the leader and director of worship. With wonder one hears the next speaker, if there be more, take up another aspect of the theme of the meeting. No jealousy, no regrets that *he* didn't think of saying that, but only gratitude that the angel has come and troubled the waters and that many are finding healing through the one Life. A gathered meeting is no place for the enhancement of private reputations, but for self-effacing pliancy and obedience to the whispers of the Leader." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> T. R. Kelly, *The Gathered Meeting*.

It is only fair to indicate what difficulties may be encountered by a stranger who associates himself in such an exacting manner of worship. The greatest handicap is the inability of many persons to concentrate in silence upon a spiritual objective. The daily life of many people calls for very little mental concentration, but carries them along from one activity to another as on a sort of production line. Those who are professionally trained or who are accustomed to abstract themselves from physical surroundings and center their attention upon the things which are not seen will evidently fare better in a Quaker meeting than those whose powers of concentration are limited or atrophied. This explains why Quakerism nowadays is recruited largely among persons possessed of some mental control. Another difficulty is the weariness of the flesh and spirit with which some strangers come to meeting and which reduces them to a comatose state of sodden waiting for the spoken ministry to which they are elsewhere accustomed. The welcome quiet lulls them into a comfortable semi-consciousness which is innocuous but which produces a thoroughly unprofitable "dead silence." This difficulty has been present from the start of the Society and can be overcome only by individual faithfulness and adequate preparation for what is a most demanding experience.

It is clear that where the Light Within is familiar and carefully followed, all subjects of a controversial nature are avoided. A meeting for worship is not a forum for the discussion of secular topics, and any stranger who conceives of such a meeting as offering an opportunity for him to sound off his personal notions on debatable

matters is entirely out of place. A Quaker meeting for worship can be better described as an unprogrammed prayer-meeting, from which there may arise a spoken ministry which should answer to the spiritual needs of those present. It has been said paradoxically but truthfully that no one should speak unless he is equally resigned to keep silent. But the converse is also true: he should not keep silent if he clearly feels he is called upon to express what has been given him for the help and encouragement of others present. If God desires human help, He will make it clear. In any case, an opportunity for silent prayer and meditation should occupy a generous part of the hour of worship. In some meetings a hymn may be sung by the congregation or by an individual. But where the leading of the Light effectively prevails, this will be done only under a strong conviction of its spiritual appropriateness.

Under such an unprogrammed and democratic manner of worship, the ideal condition calls for a high degree of preparation of the spirit before taking one's place. For it is not easy to plunge into a spiritual meditation if one enters the place of worship filled with secular thoughts and the distracting contents of a Sunday newspaper. A preoccupation with outside matters defeats inevitably that unity of purpose and desire from which alone effective community worship can arise. In this form of worship all must cooperate, or the unity of the spirit is disastrously broken. No specific preparation for oral prayer or preaching is called for, but the mind should be prepared by appropriate thought and meditation to take any part in the worship which may be indicated to a sensitive soul. Everyone in attendance is a potential minister. William Caton (1636-1665) recorded

a common discovery when he said: "I have often observed and found by experience, that by how much the more I felt the weight of the service of the meeting, before I went to it, by so much the more was my service in it, and my reward accordingly."

On this point of preparation Dr. Kelly wrote: "*Some individuals need already, upon entering the meeting, to be gathered deep in the spirit of worship. There must be some kindled hearts when the meeting begins. In them, and from them, begins the work of worship. The spiritual devotion of a few persons, silently deep in active adoration, is needed to kindle the rest, and to help those others who enter the service with tangled, harried, distraught thoughts to be melted and quieted and released and made pliant, ready for the work of God and His Real Presence. . . . Worship in a meeting-house with one's friends should be only a special period of a life of worship that underlies all one's daily affairs. For he who carries a Shekinah daily in his heart, and practices continual retirement within that Shekinah, at the same time as he is carrying on his daily affairs, has begun to prepare for worship, for he has never ceased worshipping. Such worship is no intermittent process, but a foundation layer of the life of the children of the Kingdom.*"<sup>3</sup>

The experience of such Quaker worship at its best is something of a miracle, and it has produced miracles in changed lives. A century and a half ago a stranger destined to become one of the most effective ministers of the Society—the young Frenchman Stephen Grellet—confessed of his initial experience of such a miracle: "Seeking for the Divine presence, I was favoured to

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*

find *in* me, what I had so long, and with so many tears, sought for *without* me." The Quaker poet thus expresses the healing balm which is diffused in this community withdrawal from the world:

And so, I find it well to come  
For deeper rest to this still room,  
For here the habit of the soul  
Feels less the outer world's control;  
The strength of mutual purpose pleads  
More earnestly our common needs;  
And from the silence multiplied  
By these still forms on either side,  
The world that time and sense have known  
Falls off and leaves us God alone.<sup>4</sup>

No concerned Friend is justified in staying away from meetings for worship, for he thus deprives himself of the privilege of sharing in the miracle, and he thus misses the inspiration for life and action which follows upon such evidence of divine presence. According to Job Scott, John Storer (1725-1795), an English Friend visiting Philadelphia, observed long ago that "he never knew anyone to grow or prosper in religion, who was negligent as to the attendance of religious meetings." We can truly say the same thing today.

There are manifest dangers which threaten the high aims of a Quaker meeting for worship. We have seen that people with no spiritual energy may succumb to lassitude and fall asleep in the quiet, and that some may give place to purely secular thoughts through that lack of concentration which thwarts the intentions of undisciplined minds. There may be, further, mistaken dependence upon the efforts of others which interferes

<sup>4</sup> From *Whittier's Works*. By permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.



with the cooperation which the gathered company should furnish; or those who speak may do so injudiciously, at too great length or too frequently, with disturbing mannerisms, archaic or slipshod speech, and with little appreciation of the spirit which clothes the congregation at the moment. These dangers are always present, though not always evident. So also is the danger of a Meeting depending upon one or two ministers, for when they are gone these Meetings pass into the moribund state of repeated periods of a dead silence until they dry up as spiritual wells. As was once said of an expired congregation of Quakers by an old gaffer in an English village: "They just came here and sat and sat, and nobody never said nothing, until at last they all died, and so they gave it up." We know in America what that is. No Meetings have been closed, though they may have lost touch with their spiritual Guide, through too much ministry; but there have been many closed because of no ministry at all. The spiritual state of a Meeting demands the constant care of those who have the responsibility of the ministry and its oversight.

Within the last century there has been a great change in the taste for sermons. The old-time religion may still serve, but not the old-time sermon. This is true of the greatest preachers of any denomination. The same sermons which saved souls a century ago would empty the church today. We expect of our Quaker ministry today that instead of being secular and controversial, it shall be spiritual as offered in the divine presence; instead of being archaic in expression and manner, it must be modern and winning; instead of being repetitious and monotonous, it must be fresh, pointed and brief;

instead of proceeding from the creature only, it must be waited for and urged by the Spirit within out of love for those present. When it is realized that it is not easy to comply with all these requirements, it will be seen that those who are charged with the oversight of the ministry have reason to be always vigilant. Any indiscretion or "creaturely activity" on the part of one vocal participant may undo the good accomplished by several others. This may happen when an eccentric individual is mistaken in the apprehension that he has a spiritual message. Such activity may be combined with a devastating sense of humor, as when a disturbing speaker had to be carried bodily from the house by two stalwarts, and as he was being thus conveyed to the open air, exclaimed: "I am more favored than my Lord; he was carried by one ass, but I by two."

There are some Friends with high intellectual gifts whose exercises in the ministry would satisfy the most requiring auditor. But the average Quaker ministry, though spontaneous and fairly intelligent, is not so exalted as to discourage less experienced speakers. The Quaker ministry is not judged by its oratory or by its facile delivery, but by its spiritual depth, truth and sincerity, however briefly or haltingly expressed. The quaint advice of George Fox is still pertinent: "But such as are tender, if they should be moved to bubble forth a few words, and speak in the Seed and Lamb's power, suffer and bear that." Spiritual bubbling may be very impressive if it searches the heart and incites to virtue. Covetousness is a vice, but with St. Paul we may feel free to covet the best gifts in the ministry.

There are some real assets in this type of worship which frequently appeal to strangers. In the first place,

silence is so hard to find, especially a collective silence, that many unquestionably feel that they profit by it in a Friends meeting. Then the variety of thought and presentation offered by a "free" ministry, even though untrained and spontaneous, avoids the monotony sometimes encountered in the weekly sermons of a single minister. Thirdly, the absence of a somewhat exacting creed, the absence of distractions offered by passing the plate and by the rendition of an operatic solo, the absence of the requirements of a fixed service—all these harmonize with the preference of some worshippers.

Still, when all is said, it should be realized by those present at a Quaker meeting for worship that they are sharing in a daring spiritual experiment: one has to be ready in the silence to hear and obey God, and that may be a very significant experience. So long as man keeps his worship in his own hands, so long as he can control what he says to God, he is relatively safe from surprise; he has been through it all many times before and nothing serious has ever happened. But if he lets God speak to him, there is no telling in advance what he may hear: an unmistakable revelation of the divine will concerning him may prove decidedly and decisively disturbing. He may have to gird himself for entirely unexpected action and duty. In this sense, the silence of a Quaker meeting may prove an adventure of major importance.

No other form of worship makes such demands upon the spiritual resources of those present, and no other offers more pitfalls unless the presence is felt of Him who promised to be in the midst of all assemblies of his people. For some Christians such a meeting is so lacking in familiar features as to be entirely unsatisfactory; for others, weary of forms and ceremonies, it may answer

their needs. These latter may feel: "Who would talk when God is at work?"

But when the hour of worship has been concluded by those at the head of the meeting "shaking hands" as a conventional signal of dismissal, and when secular affairs have reclaimed their place in the mind of Friends, silence is at an end. The house is not a consecrated edifice, and when the meeting "breaks," the conduct of those present is not inhibited by any consideration of sanctity. Consequently, instead of leaving the house in silence as one customarily leaves a church, Friends greet their neighbors and linger for some time in and about the building, chattering like magpies. This custom, so surprising to strangers, intends no harm to the solemnity of the preceding worship and is in part a reaction after the hour of complete immobility, and partly a survival of former days. When Friends lived on farms at a distance from each other, they saw each other only once or twice a week at meetings for worship. As the building was not a consecrated edifice, they took advantage of the opportunity to make plans and exchange news. The irrepressible sociability of Friends has caused them to continue the practice. After all, they are accustomed to answer to the witness in each other, and for that excellent practice two or more are required. Our Quaker poet has said all this more beautifully:

When shaken hands announced the meeting o'er,  
The friendly group still lingered at the door,  
Greeting, inquiring, sharing all the store  
Of weekly tidings. Meanwhile youth and maid  
Down the green vistas of the woodland strayed,  
Whispered and smiled and oft their feet delayed.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> From *Whittier's Works*. By permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

It is a legitimate criticism of this kind of worship that it, like most other Protestant services, does not attract the so-called laboring classes—that it is a form of worship fitted only for him who wears a white collar. That this was not originally the case we have already seen. Why it should be so now, and whether it need necessarily be so, are two interesting questions. It is easy to say that conditions have changed in the last hundred years and that attendance at religious worship is no longer a popular use of one's time: what was once a matter of absorbing interest to all classes of persons is so no longer. It is doubtless truer to say that there is no less need felt by our people for true religion today than formerly, but that the Protestant churches are not taking to our people what they want. Just why the Quakers, with their leveling claims of brotherhood towards all men, should be found wanting here is not too evident. They once appealed with effect to all sorts and conditions of men. Perhaps they might do so yet, if the proper approach were made. We hardly dare decide in the negative until standing in silence with occasional preaching and prayer in the street be, as it once was, tried again by Friends.

Meanwhile the lack of vocal expression in song and revival harangue would doubtless seem to many a weakness in Quaker worship. The emphasis upon silence, intellectual concentration and a depth of spiritual experience sets Quakerism apart today as a religion of those who have been favored to possess these assets. Recent "convincements" are largely among intellectuals, those who possess a degree of mental and critical capacity. Quakerism, as it is, finds favor especially in college and university communities, where new Meetings are being

established. It is the religion of people on a single social level. Quakerism, as it might be, may find its way back into the hearts of men and women to whom it once brought cleansing and saving power.

A "free" ministry has been referred to. Until within seventy-five years all ministry in the Society of Friends was strictly unpaid, in conformity with the text "Freely ye have received, freely give." Ministry is still unpaid everywhere in the world except in certain parts of America as stated earlier in speaking of the pastoral system. Meetings of the traditional type pay no compensation for any service unless it be to a secretary who keeps secular records of the Meeting and sends out all notices of appointments. If there is no minister to pay, no manse to keep up and no choir to maintain, it is evident that considerable funds are released for other purposes. The funds required for maintenance of property, for fixed charges and for the various good works in which the Meeting as a unit may be engaged are furnished by a levy on the membership once a year. A representative committee agrees upon a budget in advance and then, after approval of it in open meeting, fixes the amount to be collected from each head of a family or independent member according to his ability to pay. According to this method, there is no crackling of bills, no clinking of change and no operatic solo to disturb the hour of worship. The system is secret, noiseless and comparatively painless. The system is sufficiently effective to keep Meetings solvent.

A good deal has already been said about silence, but we are not yet through with the subject. This is because silence is second nature to any group of Friends. They have no fear of silence, but drop into it upon any

occasion. The solemnity of silence is generally recognized. It is far more impressive than noise. It is certain, for example, that no spoken words could so appropriately have opened the San Francisco Conference as the moment of silence that was called for by the Secretary of State. Any spoken prayer would have been out of place and not understood. The Quakers would have opened the Conference in the same way, but they would have remained silent a good deal longer. Perhaps statesmen may sometime learn that collective silence is more effective for good than individual oratory.

Quakers use a silent grace before meals, they provide for ample silence at weddings and funerals and at their meetings for the transaction of business. Even in their Yearly Meetings in the midst of a full agenda they will take time out for silent worship. A very profitable practice is that of opening committee and board meetings with a short silence, when no word may be uttered, but when a spirit of unity and charity is begotten among those present. Silence here seems more fitting than the peremptory order from a chairman who designates some self-conscious individual to "lead in prayer." Ambition, self-seeking and all idea of domination is put aside in the common desire to proceed to business in the spirit of love and wisdom as the group may be led. Any attempt to "put over" some personal interest is felt to be out of place. Everything is subordinated to the group judgment. This judgment is rendered not by a vote, but by vocal expressions of approval or disapproval when the Clerk or Chairman sums up what he takes to be the sense of the meeting. If there is lack of agreement, discussion may continue, the subject may be referred to a committee for further study and report, more light may

be sought in a period of silence, or the meeting may decide to let the whole matter drop for the present. If the subject under consideration is a live one, it will inevitably come up again. The motto of Quaker procedure is "when in doubt, wait." Consequently, there has been a deal of waiting in Quaker history. It took Friends nearly a century in America to rid their Society of slavery. But when a body of Friends has finally gone forward in any enterprise, spiritual or secular, it has generally gone forward in complete unity and with the weight of unanimous conviction behind it.

Steven Crisp (1628-1692), an intimate friend of William Penn, had occasion to refer to the technique we are here describing in a general epistle he addressed to Friends the world over in 1690. He says: "Although through the diversity of exercises, and the several degrees of growth among the brethren, every one may not see or understand alike in every matter, at the first propounding of it; yet this makes no breach of the unity, nor hinders the brotherly kindness; but puts you often upon an exercise, and an inward travailling to feel the sure peaceable wisdom that is from above, to open among you; and every one's ear is open to it, in whomsoever it speaks, and thereby a sense of life is given in the meeting, to which all that are of a simple and tender mind, join and agree. But if any among you should be contrary minded, in the management of some outward affair relating to the truth, this doth not presently break the unity that ye have in Christ, nor should weaken the brotherly love, so long as he keeps waiting for an understanding from God, to be gathered into the same sense with you, and walks with you according to the law of charity; such a one ought to be borne with, and



cherished, and the supplications of your souls will go up to God for him, that God may reveal it to him, if it be his will, that so no difference may be in understanding, so far as is necessary for the good of the church, no more than there is in matters of faith and obedience to God. . . .

“And whereas it may often fall out, that among a great many, some may have a different apprehension of a matter from the rest of their brethren, especially in outward or temporal things, there ought to be a christian liberty maintained for such to express their sense, with freedom of mind, or else they will go away burdened; whereas if they speak their minds freely, and a friendly and christian conference be admitted thereupon, they may be eased, and oftentimes the different apprehension of such an one comes to be wholly removed, and his understanding opened, to see as the rest see: for the danger in society doth not lie so much in that, that some few may have a differing apprehension in some things from the general sense, as it does in this, namely, when such that so differ, do suffer themselves to be led out of the bond of charity, and shall labour to impose their private sense upon the rest of their brethren, and to be offended and angry if it be not received; this is the seed of sedition and strife that hath grown up in too many, to their own hurt.”

Some business-men of other denominations have been recently so impressed with the Quaker method of doing business that it may be worth while to cite one or two examples of how this method works. The object in Quaker transaction of business is not to reach quick decisions but to reach right conclusions consistent with Truth. One desired result is that no defeated minority

is bowled over and flattened out in a mere victory of numbers. The group waits until even the minority agrees that it has had a full opportunity to state its views and is now willing to allow the judgment of the rest to be recorded as the judgment of the meeting. Until that point of cheerful willingness is reached, Quakers are content to wait. Less business may be transacted, but good feeling is preserved, and there are times when that is of paramount importance.

For example, let us suppose that quite unexpectedly in a Quaker business meeting some member refers to the peace-time Conscription Bill at the time before Congress. Many churches and organizations at the time are expressing their concern about the proposed legislation. This Friend feels that there is a prospect that the Bill will pass, and that all opposed to it must act promptly. He hopes that the Meeting will appoint a small committee to draft a suitable letter to be approved at the next meeting and then be sent to the appropriate committee chairmen and other representatives. Several members say, "I approve of doing that," "I hope that will be done," "So do I," "I do too." As to the scope of the proposed letter there may be some discussion: shall it be confined to a statement of the religious position of Friends, or shall it go further and allege the effect of such legislation upon the future position of the nation in relation to the peace of the world? Gradually there emerges the conviction, stated by an experienced Friend, that it will be well to stand on the religious principle involved rather than indulge in any predictions of ultimate effects. Several members state that upon reflection they agree to that limitation. The minute to be recorded by the Clerk and approved by the Meeting

would then read thus: "Careful consideration was given to a proposal that the Meeting should record its opposition to the present Bill introduced in Congress providing for peace-time conscription. The Meeting was united in this concern and the following committee was appointed to produce at our next meeting a letter suitable for despatch to the appropriate members of Congress, the letter to base our opposition upon the religious principles of the Society." A month later the following letter might be presented, and after approval directed to be signed by the Clerk and sent to certain personalities in Congress:

DEAR SIR,

The —— Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends wishes to express to you its opposition to all legislation involving permanent conscription. We are opposed to it on principle. We believe it to be contrary to the spirit of Christ's teachings, to which we feel bound to conform. It is abhorrent to us, too, because the sacredness of human personality is for us a deep religious conviction. Forcing the young men of America to undergo training which will make them experts in killing their fellow-men will undoubtedly recast, in varying degrees, their ideals, attitudes, and ways of thinking. This violates the sanctity of personality for every man who is made to be a party to it. For those, like ourselves, who have religious convictions in the matter, it is also a violation of conscience.

On behalf of——

*Clerk*

Let us take another question which in some respects is much larger in scope and significance. In explanation it should be said that there is a tendency for Friends to unite their strength in a common front. In 1944 three

Canada Yearly Meetings united, and in 1945 all branches of Friends in New England united in a single Yearly Meeting. The same tendency is at work in Philadelphia where there has been in sight for some years a "rapprochement" of the two bodies which separated in 1827. In 1946 after nearly a century and a quarter of separation, "Philadelphia General Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends," including but not obliterating the two existent Yearly Meetings, was set up to consider common spiritual interests and the reports of committees. But no undue pressure was applied in seeking the desired result. Some members had to be waited for until they were ready to join hands without reserve. Thus two bodies of ten thousand and five thousand members respectively gently approached each other until a high degree of unity was reached. Time was being taken for everyone to get used to the idea of union. When everyone had caught up with the leaders in the movement, the desired result was attained with no one overridden.

Friends are profoundly convinced that there is such a thing as Truth, which may be reached in unity if enough time is taken in a common search for it. They often refer to Truth as the equivalent of the divine will. It will be recalled that one of the attributes of the Inner Light was its ability to fuse in unity. If Truth is a unity, then those who seek it in the Inner Light will be united in finding it. Friends also believe that no question is permanently settled until it is rightly settled and until all concerned are satisfied with the settlement. Otherwise, as in the case of slavery, the question will keep coming up until it is rightly settled. It is not Truth that changes, but the social conscience or individual judg-

ment has to be labored with and educated until all reach the same position. It is this aspect of the case which has interested outside observers as being a practical method of conducting business. It is absolutely democratic, is respectful of individual points of view, and though slow, it carries along a finally convinced minority without hard feeling to an accomplished unity of action. There is no reason why the spirit of a Quaker business meeting should not be found practical and efficient in the transactions of many Christian committees and boards. Perhaps the substitution of this method for the rule of the majority vote will some day take place in business circles. The key to the successful use of the method is found in the willingness of everyone concerned to say, "May not my will, but the cause of Truth, be served!"

Before leaving the Quaker meetings for business, attention should be called to the scrupulous care and integrity with which the obligations of committees and trustees are carried out. The competent men and women in every Monthly Meeting are charged with an infinite number of duties and with a procession of committees which stretches out endlessly into the future. Some members are in such demand that they confess they spend more time on the Meeting business than they do on their own. However that may be, their fidelity in attending meetings and in carrying the burden laid upon them is striking. Whether it be the care of the burying-ground adjoining the meeting-house, or the allocation of financial assistance to deserving recipients, the care of trust funds, the spiritual welfare of the Meeting, or cooperation with other churches—the consistent Friend will carry out his assignment with meticulous fidelity. *He* is trained to it, and so is *she*.

The Society of Friends has been referred to as a "holding company," in which other Protestant churches have an interest. It might with equal truth be said that the circle of Quaker faith and practice contains segments of the faith and practice of other religious denominations. These segments of common experience help other Christians to understand certain features of Quakerism and to feel a measure of tolerance and good will for the Friends. Thus, Episcopalians and Roman Catholics appreciate and practice silent meditation and private prayer; Unitarians can feel unity with the Quaker concern for good works and moral causes; the Congregational emphasis upon the local authority of the congregation is like that which Friends grant to their Monthly Meetings; with the Mennonites, Schwenkfelders and Brethren the Friends have so many testimonies in common that they worship together, upon occasion, with mutual satisfaction; in many localities in America Friends and Methodists employ similar evangelistic methods; finally, intelligent Jewish refugees recently arrived from Europe have found a congenial atmosphere in a Friends meeting-house. The fact is that everyone can join in silent worship, but not everyone can join in the language peculiar to another religious experience.

## *Quaker Home Life*

Near the beginning of the last century Thomas Clarkson wrote three volumes which he called *A Portraiture of Quakerism*. Clarkson was not a Friend, but he was associated with many Quakers in London and has left us a remarkably accurate picture of the faith and practice of English Quakerism in his day. If this work were up to date, an inquirer would have little need for any other source of information. Clarkson did not limit his treatment to the organization of the Society and its "testimonies," but followed the Quakers right into their homes and places of business in order to see how they applied their religion.

Even without claiming full coverage, seventy years spent in going in and out and finding pasture in American Friends' houses may enable the present writer to portray the modern Quakers in their homes. It is not a bad place to know them, for they have a gift for sincere and abounding hospitality. At a wedding or reception, for example, in a Friend's house, there is an easy flow of conversation among relatives and friends such as needs and employs no spirituous stimulant to encourage it. The degree of intimacy which is evident is explained partially by the fact that intermarriage in old communities has produced an abnormal number of mutual relatives who cherish their cousinship to the third and fourth generation upon the same social level; also by the fact that Friends, having denied themselves certain

forms of mercantile entertainment, have cultivated the pleasures of simple sociability; and finally, though they are not conscious of it, Friends formed a close minority religious group for so long a time that they were thrown upon themselves to a marked degree for the satisfaction of their social demands.

There is nothing distinctive about either the exterior or interior architecture of Quaker homes. Friends nowadays do not move often, but dig in for long periods, two or three generations often living in the same abode. Their houses are seldom large or showy, but they are comfortably settled and equipped with the conveniences of gracious living. When domestic servants were available, Friends were as likely to have them as were other people, but this state of affairs is now mostly a memory. Neither good wages nor kind treatment are enough now to attract women to domestic service. So, if we ring, the door is likely to be opened by the "lady of the house" herself whom we have interrupted in her cooking, sewing or other housework. For there is a tradition among Friends that children should be raised with a respect for manual work and with the skill to do it efficiently when they grow up. In the present scarcity of domestic help, it has thus been possible for them to "pitch in" and do the housework with comparatively little readjustment. Of course, there is nothing remarkable about this; we are simply stating the pertinent fact that the simplicity of Quaker homes favors a self-contained household.

For simplicity and moderation are outstanding features of the typical Quaker home as they are of the Quaker himself. At the beginning of the present century the French Pastor Charles Wagner wrote *The Simple Life*. It was widely read by American Protestants. As a plea for simplicity of faith and life it is as cogent now as



it was then when it proved peculiarly congenial to Friends. They had always believed what Wagner said, but they had not in recent times expressed it so forcibly. The exhortation is frequently heard in meetings not to become enslaved to *things*, but to keep life simple and to remain "on top of the world." As Marcus Aurelius said, "Things do not touch the soul."

The lives of most Quaker housewives are probably not very different from those of their contemporaries in other communions. They may devote more time and thought to their own homes and families, but such a statement could not be proved. They certainly have a great many responsibilities *outside* their own homes. It should be remembered that under the Quaker system women from the first have been the responsible equals of men and have shared participation in and oversight of the welfare of their Meeting. Like other Christian women, they have their numerous committees for missions, peace, sewing, Bible study, socials, etc. In addition they are associated with other citizens in the management of local libraries, hospitals, asylums, Christian Associations, cooperatives and such like. Their life is perhaps somewhat less distracted than that of some other women, because they do not have to mingle with these good works so many musicales, bridge games and cocktail parties. As a result, Quaker women enjoy fewer nervous breakdowns, and many live to the advanced age which moderation is alleged to favor.

But we must halt to make a reservation. It is true that consistent members of the Society of Friends have never considered their membership in the Society as a qualification for participation in the activities of worldly society. But some others have done so. Now it is not easy to reconcile the gaiety and prominence sought

by social leaders with strict devotion to the interests of any church. It is certainly not easy to reconcile love of the world with allegiance to the fundamental principles of Quakerism. When the attempt is made, it is Quakerism which slips. Without thus attaining the distinction attaching to social leaders, it is nevertheless true that many Quakers—men as well as women—have been distracted by “the world” from strict devotion to simplicity and plainness. Both wealth and social ambition have tended to complicate life and to weaken modern Quakerism in America and England.

This serious stricture having been made, we may return to the simplicity of our hostess and the house we are visiting. There is likely to be some handsome mahogany or curly-maple furniture upstairs as well as downstairs, and there may be a cupboard full of treasured family glass and china which gives the owner a solid satisfaction. But there may be a lack of those ash-trays and cocktail glasses which are conspicuous features of modern equipment. In cases and on tables will be seen nowadays plenty of books—solid books of poetry, biography, travel, nature and religion rather than novels of the moment—and on the walls portraits and pictures of historic sites and of natural beauties rather than creations of purely artistic fancy.

The present Quaker taste in music, art and literature is an evolution from an earlier attitude to which some reference may prove illuminating. Music, being associated with the church worship of the “world’s people,” was discountenanced by early Friends as a waste of time. All instrumental music was banned both in worship and in the home. Within the memory of the present writer a Philadelphia Friend felt it necessary to confess publicly

to the possession of an organ for the entertainment of an invalid daughter. Instrumental music and of course dancing and dramatics were ruled out of most Quaker educational institutions until the present century. So long did the Puritanical view of music and dancing as trivial and dangerous pastimes prevail among conservative Friends.

Drawing and painting were considered less pernicious than music, and many keepsakes and sketch-books from the last century testify to the taste for this chaste art among Friends. These same keepsakes contain many modest samples of moral and religious poetry which was composed for private consumption. By the solid piety and virtue of their sentiments Milton, Cowper and Whittier did much to reconcile even the plainest Friends with moral and religious poetry. As early as 1662 Thomas Ellwood, Milton's Quaker secretary, beguiled the enforced leisure of his London prison by composing in rhyming pentameters *A Looking Glass for the Times*. Until modern times, moral, religious, nature and graveyard poetry took precedence with Friends over prose fiction. The English Quaker poet, Bernard Barton (1784-1849) had good reason not to be proud of his verses, but he *did* contend that

the Quaker creed  
By fair interpretation  
Has nothing in it to impede  
Poetic aspiration:  
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All that fair nature's charms display  
Of grandeur or of beauty;  
All that the human heart can sway,  
Joy, grief, desire, or duty.

There were public libraries and school libraries under the care of Friends in which no prose fiction was allowed until after the beginning of the present century. Yearly Meeting minutes utter warning against "the hurtful tendency of reading plays, novels and other pernicious books." When examining the open shelves in the fiction section of a public library today, one may share such apprehension. But under our universal educational system the time is past for erecting any hedge around the reading of youth. We boast that our education teaches us to read *anything*, and we do. That is the trouble—no discrimination, no concern whether a book raises or lowers our thoughts and emotions. A critic once said of a certain poet that he always raised the tone of the reader's mind. That is a fine tribute. It were well if more writers sought to deserve it. As will be seen in one of the Queries printed below, all we can do is to seek to guide the tastes of our children to books and other recreations which will make them finer men and women.

While on the subject of fiction, one other remark is in order. Due to the lack of qualified authors, there is little satisfactory treatment of Quaker home life in fiction. Those who possess the necessary knowledge lack the literary skill, and those who have the literary skill lack the intimate knowledge of the subject. Perusal of certain recent novels in which Quaker characters appear reveals the most astonishing ignorance of the basis of Quakerism and its application in life. Even the use of the "plain language" has proved too much for the novelists to master—an ignorance resulting in the most grotesque errors. The most casual inquiry from the proper sources would have prevented a portrayal of Quakers which is sometimes ludicrous and sometimes insulting. It seems as though the Quakers were introduced in some

cases only to counterbalance the blasphemy, intemperance and lechery in which the other characters habitually indulge. The time for any picture of the Quakers as a "peculiar people" is past. They now offer no more color to the novelist than would a group of Presbyterians or Christian Scientists. As stated earlier, it is in the scores of memoirs and autobiographical journals which date from before the middle of the nineteenth century that one must look for a faithful portrayal of Quaker life in the past.

Friends of the olden time felt that they should surround themselves with reminders of the essential seriousness of life. What they read and what they looked at should be "improving." They had no interest in art for art's sake. Clarkson says that about 1800 in England there were three pictures to be seen in Quaker homes of the period: William Penn's Treaty with the Indians by West, the print of a crowded slave-ship, and the plan for the building of Ackworth School near York. Peace, anti-slavery and education were all proper Quaker interests, but they do not offer much inspiration for the secular artist. In our own memory the parlors of plain Friends contained few pictures or vain ornaments. An engraving of Elizabeth Fry, either alone or reading the Bible to the women in Newgate prison, was suitable in any place for the past hundred years, and a mound of handsome conch shells was considered in the nineteenth century a sufficient ornament for the parlor mantelpiece. Nowadays, a Friend's house such as the one we are visiting in imagination could be distinguished only by the presence of a good deal of solid reading matter, simple furniture and pictures of people, historic sites and natural scenes. Surviving "samplers" prove the industry and skill of little Quaker girls a century ago. There are

unfortunately few painted portraits of Quaker worthies before the nineteenth century, when portraiture first came in through the opening wedge of silhouettes, daguerreotypes and photographs. In Quaker houses simplicity and utility have resisted changing styles in interior decorating.

A glance at the hands of our hostess reminds us of the increasing use of jewelry by many Quaker women. Where our grandmothers wore no rings, our mothers wore only a plain gold wedding-ring—an "alliance" as the French prettily call it; where our wives wear several rings, our children may add ear-rings and bracelets as well. So it goes also with dress, but to a lesser degree. Moderation in dress styles is characteristic of Quaker women everywhere. No Quaker group in coming out of a meeting-house could be mistaken for the congregation of a fashionable church. The women's hats and clothes are not the extreme models of the latest fashion-show, and many men frequently wear the same styles for decades. This attitude toward the relative unimportance of one's covering is traditional and has become quite unconscious among many Friends. While good materials that wear well are selected, the latest cut and trimmings of one's wardrobe are matters of indifference. The "testimony" implied in this simplicity goes back to the beginnings of the contact of the Society with the world's people. In 1654 George Fox wrote:

"What a world is this! how doth the devil garnish himself! and how obedient are people to do his will and mind! They are altogether so carried away with fooleries and vanities, both men and women, that they have lost the hidden man of the heart, and the meek and quiet spirit, which with the Lord is of great price. They have lost the adorning of Sarah; they are putting

on gold and gay apparel; women plaiting the hair, men and women powdering it; making their backs look like bags of meal. They look strange, that they can scarce look at one another, they are so lifted up in pride. Pride is flown up into their head, and hath so lifted them up, that they snuff up like wild asses; like Ephraim, they feed upon the mountains. Pride hath puffed up every one of them: they are out of the fear of God, men and women, young and old; one puffs up another. They must be in the fashion of the world, else they are not in esteem; else they shall not be respected, if they have not gold or silver upon their backs, or if the hair be not powdered. But if he have store of ribands hanging about his waist, and at his knees, and in his hat, of divers colours, red, white, black, or yellow, and his hair be powdered, then he is a brave man . . .

“Likewise the women, having their gold, their patches on their faces, noses, cheeks, foreheads; having their cuffs double, under and above, like unto a butcher with his white sleeves; having their ribands tied about their hands, and three or four gold laces about their clothes; this is not Quaker, say they. This attire pleaseth the world: and if they cannot get those things, they are discontented.” Two or three decades later William Penn, though a wealthy gentleman himself, reproached these same practices as savoring too much of the world and its distractions. In Penn’s judgment clothes were worn for warmth, for decency and to distinguish the sexes. In 1948 the last purpose is scarcely valid.

The result of such diatribes against worldly dress is found in the simple garb adopted by “plain” Friends in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Such plain people dressed simply, spoke simply and lived simply. As has been said by the leading authority on the sub-

ject, what must be emphasized in any study of the Quakers' idea of dress "is the fact that their attention to plainness, and to all the details of everyday life, was a natural reaction from dogmatism, royal prerogative and worldly extravagance."<sup>1</sup> The simplicity of wealthy Friends in England and America in the nineteenth century was, however, blended with a very comfortable establishment, a winning courtesy and bounteous hospitality. Lindley Murray, the Quaker grammarian, was a wealthy American who went with his wife to live for years near York, England. When Professor Silliman of Yale went in 1805 to visit the Murrays, he reported: "He belongs to the Society of Friends, but both he and Mrs. Murray have so tempered the strictness of manners peculiar to their Society, that they are polished people, with the advantage of the utmost simplicity of deportment."<sup>2</sup> This could still be said of many Quaker homes in England and in this country.

In our own day the peace and serenity of the American home is threatened by outside forces. The capacity for concentrated constructive thought is in many cases nearly atrophied. Children maintain that they cannot study without the radio. Visual methods are reducing much instruction to the level of the movies. Use of the memory is in bad repute among some educators. Facts are accumulated with no provision for their digestion. Of the Bible and of the classic literature of our race our children are profoundly ignorant. We are all being fed on second-hand, predigested food. Our ideas are being furnished to us gratis by the most effective barrage of propaganda yet devised by man. We are told what to

<sup>1</sup> Amelia M. Gummere, *The Quaker: A Study in Costume*, Phila., 1901.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah S. Murray, *In the Olden Time*, N. Y., 1894, p. 40.



read, believe, think, suspect and fear; what to eat, drink, smoke and wherewithal we may clothe and anoint our bodies; we are told where to go as well as how. It is increasingly difficult to find any place for silence or time for meditation. If this is true on the intellectual level, it is more true on the spiritual level. Our spiritual nature actually lacks opportunity for nourishment. A Quaker meeting guarantees some silence for those who are seeking it removed from the madding crowd. But once a week is not often enough. Those who have the surest foundation, those whose lives are most serene, know that frequent withdrawal from distracting sights and sounds alone satisfies the soul longing for a place upon some higher plane. Quakerism at its best is not dismissed in an hour's worship one day a week; it is a religion of seven days a week.

Although no statistics are available, and it is not a matter of record, it is safe to say that the serenity and the patent joy of many Christians comes from the habit of daily retirement for meditation and prayer. There are many aids to quiet concentration upon the spiritual forces which surround us and which work within us: the Bible, books of devotion, the prayer-book are accessible to all. But they are not a necessary accompaniment for what should be a few moments of self-surrender and self-inquiry at the beginning of the day. But one requirement for such a fruitful silence is that it shall not be hurried or terminated by the sound of a bell. One recalls the grudging manner of Sir Brian Newcomb at his family prayers which, as Thackeray remarks, occupied but three minutes, after which the family repaired to its regular avocations for the next twenty-three hours and fifty-seven minutes. Daily family reading of the Bible and devotional silence was for so long a period an in-

tegral part of Quaker practice that any account of their private life would be incomplete without it. Where the practice no longer obtains, a sensible loss may be observed.

There can be no doubt that the sense of the frequent, if not the continual, presence of God has definite effects upon the moderation of our habits, the deliberation of our speech and action, the wisdom of our decisions. When George Fox wrote: "Friends be not hasty; for he that believes in the light, makes not haste," he meant that we should be sure that we are under divine guidance before we speak or act. For a man is not valued for his much speaking, but for the evident authority with which he speaks—what someone called "holy pertinence." Only if we choose a lofty source for our inspiration, can we avoid what Friends have called "frothy," "light," "chaffy," or "windy" utterance and speak with the "authority of Truth."

Deliberation leads into moderation in eating, drinking, speech, as well as in dress and scale of living to which reference has been made. It discourages extravagance in every department of life. Some of its consequences have been significant. In the centuries when the use of beer and ale as beverages was general, the Quakers preached temperance and refrained from the foolish practice of drinking healths. At the very beginning of his Journal Fox tells how as a youth he renounced this custom once for all. In later times the Friends have been active in both the temperance and total abstinence movements, and the excessive use of intoxicating liquors among them is rare. Indeed, the official *Advices* of the Yearly Meetings keep the ideal of abstinence constantly before their members.

In the seventeenth century social inequality was marked and obsequious hypocrisy was prevalent in speech and conduct. The Quakers contended for simplicity, sincerity and social equality before God. So they refused "hat honor" to all men and women, remaining covered even before the king. At the time hats were generally worn by men even in the house and were removed only to show honor or subservience to a social superior. The Friends contended that such honor should be done only to God. What is a small matter now was a matter of vital import in the seventeenth century. It was a case of conscience, and many Quakers were sent to jail for remaining covered in court. It was not easy for some well-bred young Quakers of the day like Ellwood, Barclay and Penn to observe this universal practice of their fellows. As Barclay said, "In its being so contrary to our natural spirits, there are many of us to whom the forsaking of these bowings and ceremonies were as death itself; which we could never have left if we could have enjoyed our peace with God in the use of them." With this quotation Amelia M. Gummere concludes her chapter on "The Spirit of the Hat" in her study of Quaker costume.

Moreover, Friends used the plain language of the day—thou, thee and thy—instead of the fashionable and incorrect plural pronoun "you" for a single person. The Quaker protest has little significance in these democratic days of ours, but an idea of its significance in 1660 can be gained from *A Battle-Door for Teachers and Professors to Learn Plural and Singular* attributed to George Fox himself and two associated Friends, with illustrations drawn from over thirty ancient and modern tongues.

The use of the plain language, though far from universal among Friends today, is still frequent. It is much used to members of the same family, to relatives and to old friends. It is rarely used to non-Friends. It is not always easy for new members to use it when they would like to do so, for it requires learning and a very subtle sense of its appropriateness. Similarly some Friends avoid saying Mr., Mrs. and Miss to other Friends by using their first names alone or, in the case of young persons addressing those who are older or worthy of respect, by their full names. Thus, "Charles Jones, I am glad to see thee looking so well." Rather inconsistently, Friends have no hesitation in employing such titles as Doctor, Professor and President. Further comment upon this intricate subject would doubtless result only in confusion! The "feel" comes by years of association with Friends. Similarly, the use of ordinal numbers for the days of the week and for the months of the year is unique among "plain" Friends, though it was universal until a few decades ago. The popular jingle about the days of the month beginning

Thirty days hath September,  
April, June and November—

becomes in Quaker parlance:

The fourth, eleventh, ninth and sixth,  
We thirty days to each affix;  
All the rest have thirty-one  
Except the second month alone;  
To it we twenty-eight assign,  
But leap-year makes it twenty-nine.

These minor "testimonies" are only mentioned here, not for their present-day significance, but for the guidance of strangers.

It should be further remarked of Quaker conversation that such trivial words and expressions as "luck," "chance," "I'll bet," "I'll swear," were not heard in the mouths of grandparents of Quakers still living. There was no place for such expressions in the philosophy of those who believed that all happened under divine guidance and that there was one standard of truth. Even "goodbye," being a form of "God be with you," was felt to be slightly sacrilegious and was uniformly replaced by the beautiful word "farewell."

Still pertinent today is the ancient Quaker refusal to swear in court or to take oaths of allegiance. In early times thousands of Friends were imprisoned for this cause, but they established the right of affirmation for all men in the British Empire and in the United States. William Penn's *Treatise of Oaths* (1675) is the classic treatment of the subject, and any unprejudiced reader could hardly fail to see the iniquity of recognizing a double standard of truth. The man who swears he will tell the truth in court is tacitly admitting that under other circumstances he could not be counted on to do so. Neither he nor the court appears to observe this. But the Friends observed it from the first and have remained quite consistent on this point to the present day. The cynical administration of the oath by officials was rebuked by Hawthorne nearly a century ago. When United States consul at Liverpool, he commented upon "the consular copy of the New Testament, bound in black morocco, and greasy, I fear, with a daily succession of perjured kisses; at least, I can hardly hope that all

the ten thousand oaths, administered by me between two breaths, to all sorts of people and on all manner of worldly business, were reckoned by the swearer as if taken at his soul's peril."

The historic practice of swearing upon a book which directs men to "swear not at all" seems illogical. But the real reason for the Quaker attitude is that Friends knew but one standard of truth, and they pointed out, what was eminently true, that those who are most ready to swear are often the most ready to lie in their testimony. Nor was the oath of allegiance any more of a guarantee of loyalty to Government formerly than it is now. The Quakers claimed that their affirmation covered all the ground and they asked for the same punishment as that meted out to perjurers, if they should come short of the whole truth or of loyalty to the sovereign.

That the first Quakers were warranted in their disparagement of oaths of allegiance is shown in the remarks of an honest Independent member of the House who declared in a Parliamentary debate in December, 1659 that "those oaths that had been formerly impos'd had but multiplied the sins of the nation's perjuries; instancing how Sr. Ar. [Sir Arthur Haselrig] and others, in Oliver's time, comming into the house, swore at their entrance they would attempt nothing in the change of that government, which, assoone as ever they were enter'd, they labour'd to throw downe." <sup>3</sup>

In the long story of persecution for conscience' sake on this account, there must have been occasionally a diverting court episode. In the Memoir of John Roberts (1620-1683) we are told how his son Daniel was once detained by Sir Thomas Cutter who asked him: "What's

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, London, 1904, p. 372.

your name?"—"Daniel Roberts."—"Can you swear?"—"Not that I know of; I never tried."—"Then you must begin now."—"I think I shall not."—"How will you help it?"—"By not doing it. But if thou canst convince me by that book in thy hand (which was a Bible) that it is lawful to swear, since Christ forbids it, then I will swear. For when men come and say, 'you must swear or suffer,' 'tis but reasonable to expect such men should be qualified to prove it lawful. Our Savior says 'swear not at all'; thou sayest I must swear. Pray which must I obey?"—"Well, Daniel, if you will not swear, you must go to jail."—"The will of God be done. For be it known to you, we had rather be in prison and enjoy our peace with God, than be at liberty and break our peace with him."

A more classical court scene is one described by George Fox in which he himself was involved:

"I was brought before Judge Twisden on the 14th day of the First Month, called March, in the latter end of the year 1663. When I was set up to the Bar, I said, 'Peace be amongst you all.' The judge looked upon me, and said, 'What! do you come into the Court with your hat on?' Upon which, the jailer taking it off, I said, 'The hat is not the honour that comes from God.' Then said the judge to me, 'Will you take the oath of Allegiance, George Fox?' I said, 'I never took any oath in my life, nor any covenant or engagement.' 'Well,' said he, 'will you swear or no?' I answered, 'I am a Christian, and Christ commands me not to swear, and so does the apostle James, and whether I should obey God or man, do thou judge.' 'I ask you again,' said he, 'whether you will swear or not.' I told him they had had experience enough, how many men had first sworn for the King

and then against him. But as for me, I had never taken an oath in all my life; and my allegiance did not lie in swearing, but in truth and faithfulness; for I honour all men, much more the King. Then I asked the judge if he did own the King. 'Yes,' said he, 'I do own the King.' 'Why then,' said I, 'dost thou not observe his declaration from Breda, and his promises made since he came into England, that no man should be called in question for matters of religion, so long as they lived peaceably? Now if thou ownest the King, why dost thou call me into question, and put me upon taking an oath which is a matter of religion, seeing neither thou nor any else can charge me with unpeaceable living?'

"Upon this he was moved, and looking angrily at me, said, 'Sirrah! will you swear?' I told him, I was none of his sirrahs, I was a Christian; and for him, an old man and a judge, to sit there and give names to prisoners, it did not become either his gray hairs or his office. 'Well,' said he, 'I am a Christian too.' 'Then do Christian works,' said I. 'Sirrah!' said he, 'thou thinkest to frighten me with thy words.' Then catching himself and looking aside, he said, 'Hark! I am using the word again'; and so checked himself. I said, 'I spake to thee in love; for that language did not become thee, a judge. Thou oughtest to instruct a prisoner in the law, if he were ignorant and out of the way.' 'And I speak in love to thee too,' said he. 'But,' said I, 'love gives no names.' Then he roused himself up, and said, 'I will not be afraid of thee, George Fox; thou speakest so loud, thy voice drowns mine and the Court's; I must call for three or four criers to drown thy voice: thou hast good lungs.' 'I am a prisoner here,' said I, 'for the Lord Jesus



Christ's sake; for His sake do I suffer, for Him do I stand this day; and if my voice were five times louder, I should lift it up, and sound it for Christ's sake, for whose sake I stand this day before your judgment-seat in obedience to Christ who commands not to swear; before whose judgment-seat you must all be brought and must give an account.' 'Well,' said the judge, 'George Fox, say whether thou wilt take the oath, yea or nay.' I replied, 'I say, as I said before, whether ought I to obey God or man, judge thou. If I could take any oath at all, I should take this; for I do not deny some oaths only, or on some occasions, but all oaths, according to Christ's doctrine, who hath commanded His followers not to swear at all.' . . . 'Then you will not swear,' said the judge; 'take him away, jailer.' I said, 'It is for Christ's sake that I cannot swear, and for obedience to His command I suffer, and so the Lord forgive you all.' So the jailer took me away; but I felt the mighty power of the Lord was over them all."

Thus the testimony was borne in the seventeenth century. Many citizens today, when tendered the choice of an affirmation or an oath, choose the former as more consistent with their single standard of truth. Legal traditions die hard, but the futility of the judicial oath is becoming more apparent. Indeed, on that most serious document, the Income Tax Return, the oath and notary are not required, but a signature to the following statement: "I declare under the penalties of perjury that this return . . . has been examined by me and to the best of my knowledge and belief is a true, correct, and complete return." The privilege of making that dignified statement is precisely what the Quakers in England

contended and suffered for three hundred years ago. What was then a matter of conscience is now a matter of common sense.

But there is another kind of still more reprehensible swearing, better referred to as blasphemy and greatly in vogue now among a certain school of writers. To blasphemous language Friends have taken unqualified exception. It is a habit hard to cure by reproof. But the following instance shows a typical Quaker way of checking profanity. The story is told of John M. Whitall (1800–1877). On the way by stage from Camden, N. J. to Millville he had to sit beside a very profane driver. How should he effectively express his disapproval? “Suddenly there flashed into his mind a story to the point, about a sea-captain and a Quaker, which he had heard many years before, and in the course of conversation he repeated it to the driver. It was in substance as follows: A Friend, wishing to go to England on a religious visit, applied to a certain sea-captain for a passage. The captain entirely refused to take him, although his vessel was the only one at that time sailing for the desired port. Repeated urgings on the part of the Friend produced no effect, and at last he insisted on knowing the reason. ‘Well,’ said the captain, ‘if you must know, it is because I am sure I cannot manage my crew if you are on board. I have always managed them by swearing, and I know you will not let me swear, and therefore they will do just as they please.’ ‘But if I promise never to say a word about thy swearing,’ said the Friend, ‘wilt thou not then be willing to take me?’ After some demur the captain consented to take him on this condition, and they sailed in company. In a very short time a storm arose, and in the midst the captain came down into the

cabin of his passenger and exclaimed excitedly, 'There, I knew just how it would be! You won't let me swear, and I can't manage the sailors without it, and now this storm has come up and we shall all be lost, and it will be your fault.' 'But,' remonstrated the Friend, 'I have not said a word to thee on the subject, I have kept my promise faithfully, have I not?' 'Oh, yes,' replied the captain, 'you have kept still enough, but I have known all along how wicked you thought it, and somehow I just can't do it, try as I may; and it's all of no use, we shall certainly be lost.' The Friend then proposed to go on deck with the captain and see what could be done; and when there he called the sailors together, told them what the captain had said, and asked them if they would not agree to obey his orders if he gave them without oaths. The sailors agreed heartily, and the captain from that moment found himself able to control and manage his crew without the slightest difficulty, and without the necessity for a single oath, and declared at the end of the voyage that he had never had so little trouble.

"The story was told without comment of any kind, and the driver listened in silence, but swore no more that day. Years passed, when upon one occasion the same driver came into our father's place of business and asked him if he remembered that day on the stage, telling him that from that hour he had never uttered a single oath, and that shortly after he had become a religious man." <sup>4</sup> Such a tactful appeal to conscience was in the best manner of John Woolman.

By an extension of silence to social habits the Quaker shrinks from any violent word or action which will inevitably thrust him before the public eye. He prefers

<sup>4</sup> *John M. Whittall*, Phila., 1879, pp. 223-225.

to be in the background or out of sight, working quietly in a good cause at the bottom of the heap. This trait has unfortunately tended to keep Friends in America out of candidacy for any public office which may involve a noisy campaign, violent language and a list of promises which cannot be kept. Friends prefer to do better than they say. In business they avoid glittering inducements and noisy assertions of superior claims over their competitors.

Starting this chapter with a glance around the interior of a Quaker home, we have had occasion to enlarge upon some of the factors which have combined to make it what it is. Much as the present exemplars of Quakerism have become assimilated by the standards and practices of the society which surrounds them, certain traits of character and certain moral attitudes are still to be distinguished. The Friends are no longer entitled to any distinction as "a peculiar people." They are no longer picturesque in dress or to be detected by their language. This fact may be regretted by some as a loss, but it is not serious. What would be serious would be the loss of that moderation, serene deliberation and consideration for others, to which qualities in the home we have directed our attention in this chapter. It is now time to step out from the meeting-house and the home to follow the Quakers into their business and worldly contacts.

## *Vocations and Avocations*

One hundred years ago a large number of Friends lived in the country, and we have seen how strong their numbers and influence were in America at the time of the Great Separation in 1827. Many still are farmers upon their own land, where all in the family have their duties and there is not much time for vanity or nonsense. The memoirs and biographies of the last two centuries give a picture of this rural life in which, despite the rigorous requirements of the land and stock, time was taken for meetings for worship twice a week. In the East now there are rather few Quaker dirt farmers, and it is perhaps true everywhere that the tendency is for Friends, when possible, to move into suburban neighborhoods where certain advantages can be more readily secured. Education is carrying more Quaker youth into the higher branches of professional training; more recreational advantages are demanded; and the tendency has been for young people to seek their living as employees of a large corporation rather than as self-contained units on the land. All this has resulted in some loss of independent action. The business world, and especially their obligation to others, takes a larger place in the thought of young Friends and they are not free to attend meetings for worship on week-days or the more protracted meetings for business which occur at regular intervals. This conflict of legitimate activities has weak-

ened the solidarity and responsibility of Friends in many localities.

Apart from farming and the many kinds of business in which Friends engage, the professions which have claimed their allegiance are teaching, medicine and law. On account of the close personal relations and the possibility of doing good to one's fellows inherent in the practice of these professions, they have made an inevitable appeal to Friends. To Quaker education reference will be made in a later chapter. In medicine it has been the general practice in a given neighborhood rather than highly specialized office practice that has claimed the attention of Friends. The "family doctor" best furnishes the opportunity for the Quaker idea of service through medicine.

Little needs to be said about Quakers in the practice of law, except that their practice is limited in general to civil and corporation law, defense of the constitutional rights of citizens, the business of executors and the care of trust funds and estates. Any part in the practice of criminal law has been very rare, doubtless because of the pitfalls to which counsel in such cases may be exposed. Those branches of the law, however, which demand fidelity, attention and scrupulous integrity on the part of counsellors and attorneys have always attracted the study and practice of Friends.

Few Quakers in the past have studied theology in a professional way, for the Quaker tradition is against it, not because it is evil but because it is felt to be unnecessary in preparation for a lay ministry. Except where "the pastoral system" prevails, Friends have never quite gotten away from George Fox's early conviction "that to be bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to make a

man fit to be a minister of Christ." When a person, man or woman, is "recorded" a minister, it is because he is thought by his fellow members to possess a gift in the ministry. Such a person may be intellectually endowed, or he may not, but there must be no doubt about his sincerity, his character and the spiritual guidance visible in his life. His qualifications, then, come from inside him and not from the outside only. There is no doubt, however, that modern Friends are becoming more expectant that those who are exercised in the ministry shall be intellectually alert and acquainted with contemporary thought. By some it is felt that a course at Hartford or Union Seminary or at Moody Bible Institute is the best preparation for a ministry adapted to the more exacting demands of our day which the old-fashioned type of sermon no longer satisfies. But where meetings are small and the organization is informal, it is evident that emphasis will continue to be placed, in the future as in the past, upon simplicity of utterance and depth of spiritual experience.

Preparation for teaching, medicine, law, engineering and theology remains, of course, the same discipline for the Quaker as for anyone else. The significant thing is the spirit the Quaker puts into what he does. A stranger dealing with a Quaker ought to be able to sense the nature of this spirit; if he doesn't, there is something the matter with the Quaker.

Few Quaker businessmen confine their energies to the conduct of their business. They find time to indulge their nature hobbies, to engage in scientific pursuits, and above all to share in institutional management out of all proportion to the small number of Quakers in the world. The reason for this is not far to seek: "Freedom

from the distractions of the world at large and a desire to employ seriously every moment of leisure time led many Quakers into paths of education, science and philanthropy.”<sup>1</sup> We have seen that Friends spend comparatively little money upon the maintenance of their religious worship and upon the requirements of their domestic life. This leaves them with more money for the support of humanitarian establishments and with more time for their efficient management. They know the solid satisfaction that accompanies their part in education and in the public trusts connected with libraries, hospitals, asylums and other humanitarian institutions. The last two centuries alone produced such outstanding personalities in this sphere of activity as Joseph John Gurney, his sister the lovely Elizabeth Fry, John G. Whittier, gentle Lucretia Mott, William Allen, Joseph Sturge, Joseph Lancaster, Lindley Murray, John Bartram, Peter Collinson, Peter Bedford, Dr. John Fothergill, John Dalton, Dr. John C. Lettsom, Pliny Earle, and more recently Lord Lister, Silvanus P. Thompson, four generations of Tukes at York, and the late Sir Arthur S. Eddington. Such names, familiar to many readers, remind us of what Quakers have accomplished on both sides of the Atlantic in extra-curricular activities.

Quakerism is a personal religion with strong mystical features. It would run the risk incurred by some other manifestations of mysticism, if it were not also impregnated with altruism, the urge to express itself in practical ways for the sake of others. It is no longer satisfied to live in a state of beatific contemplation of the Light Within, partitioned off from the life and the work of mankind. The ideal Friend must obey the leadings of

<sup>1</sup> Cuthbert Dukes, *Lord Lister*, London and Boston, 1924, p. 29.



the Guide Within in his life and work, in his faith and practice. No Quaker life is complete, nor does it attain its proper ends if it does not reach out to share in the problems and to help bear the burdens of society. An English lady in the last century who had an extensive acquaintance with different communions remarked on this point: "I have ever valued in the Society of Friends, the combination of their heavenly principles and their business-like knowledge of the actual facts of life, by which means principles are brought to bear upon realities, not evaporated in romantic affections or unfeasible schemes, but truly working out their heavenly course through the medium of wise regulation, education and discipline." <sup>2</sup> The same point is made by an American observer in our own day: "To liberal social philosophers it [i.e., Quakerism] adds the prerequisite of religious belief, and to doctrinal religious traditions it adds the individualistic and humanitarian emphasis." <sup>3</sup> Quakerism, then, is practical mysticism—a mystical religion put to work.

To show how the essential truths of Christianity as interpreted by Friends flow over into daily life, we shall print here the *Advices* currently addressed annually to the members of one of the oldest Yearly Meetings in America (Arch St., Phila.). These Advices are new in their modern form, but they are based quite directly upon the advice which George Fox was wont to address to his contemporaries in regard to their spiritual and civil duties. (Much of Fox's own advice will be conveniently found in L. V. Hodgkin's *A Day-Book of*

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck*, 2 vols., Phila., 1859, Vol. II, p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> Hintz, *The Quaker Influence in American Literature*, N. Y., 1940, p. 94.

*Counsel and Comfort from the Epistles of George Fox*, London, 1937). These modern *Advices* serve today as a preparation for answering the Queries.

#### ADVICES

Friends are advised carefully to inspect the state of their finances at least once in the year, and to make provision for the settlement of their outward affairs while in health.

Meetings are enjoined to care for timely renewal of trusts: also, to see that all public gifts and legacies are strictly applied to the uses intended by the donors. When this becomes difficult or impracticable early application should be made to the Representative Meeting for advice or assistance.

We discourage membership in secret societies since we believe that these are incapable of producing any good which might not be effected by open means, and that the pledge to secrecy is in itself a surrender of independence which tends to moral decadence and spiritual loss. Every individual should be free to follow the truth in thought and action without any restriction through a pledge to secrecy.

We urge our members to avoid all use of intoxicating liquors and actively to uphold the cause of total abstinence. We urge also the avoidance of tobacco and narcotic drugs.

Friends should instruct their children in the way of life which we, as a Religious Society, have professed, and teach them the principles which have guided us. They should strive to lead them to Jesus Christ, "the Way, the Truth and the Life." To follow Him loyally, fearlessly and gladly is to find "that life which is life indeed."

May we keep a close and understanding sympathy with our children. May we meet the responsibilities of parenthood intelligently and reverently and ask for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to guide us. May we help our children to wise choice in reading, recreation, friendship and social relationships, that all their interests may make for Christian character and spiritual growth.

Friends are advised to watch carefully over the education of their children and to place them in schools which will not only build them up physically and mentally, but will foster their moral and spiritual life.

We believe that marriage is an ordinance of God, and that He alone can rightly join man and woman therein. When any contemplate marriage, may they seek Divine guidance, without which it will lack the highest consummation. Marriage is an experience of spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical adjustment. It is a happy and helpful experience if mutual love, unselfishness and service inspire it. Parents should see that their children receive wise counsel concerning the new life opening before them, and should help them to understand that far more important than wealth or worldly advantage are character, mutual respect, and unity in religious attitudes and ideals.

In the growing complexity of life, let us strive to keep true to our ideals of sincerity and simplicity, to keep before us the essential truths and test our lives by them, and to keep our family life from the distractions of useless activities. Let us seek for that inward faith which shall be as a rock foundation and for that peace which shall hold firm in outward confusion.

As followers of Christ let us remember that we are called to help in establishing the Kingdom of God on earth. May our sense of brotherhood with all men be strong, leading us as workers, as employers and in all other relations to make the chief aim of our lives service rather than gain. May it inspire us to earnest efforts after a social order in which no one is hindered in his development by meagre income, insufficient education and too little freedom in directing his own life. May it lead us not only to minister to those in need, but to seek to understand the causes of social and industrial ills, and to do our part as individuals and as a Society for their removal.

Let us be earnest about the spread of Christ's message of

love among those who have not heard it, and support the work of missions both at home and abroad, that the command to preach the gospel among the nations may be fulfilled. Let us guard ourselves against religious intolerance and cherish in our hearts a spirit of love for all men.

Friends' belief in that of God in every man should lead us to reverence personality in every human being regardless of race. Let us encourage all efforts to overcome racial prejudices and antagonisms, and economic, social and educational discrimination.

War is contrary to the life and teaching of Jesus. Every human being is a child of the Heavenly Father, and has a Divine spark that claims our reverence. War ignores this. It denies the sovereign value of human personality, and it abrogates fundamental Christian virtues. Therefore the elimination of war is essential to Christian international relations.

Thus our peace testimony is not negative, it is the positive exercise of good will in human relationships. May we lend our influence to all that strengthens the growth of international friendship and understanding, and may we give our active support to movements that substitute co-operation and justice for force.

May parents and teachers cultivate this active spirit of love and peace, and let us all "live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars."

The First-day of the week should be a time for worship and religious service, for fostering family life, for rest and leisure; when we may turn our minds from the more material round of daily life to intellectual and spiritual refreshment. Its observance has been precious to Friends and we desire to hold fast that which is good in this respect.

May we be diligent in attendance at our meetings for worship and strive to come to them with a sense of our individual responsibility so that we may not mar or hinder, but rather contribute to that purity and freedom of the

spirit in which, as united worshippers, we find communion with Him who is the Head of the Church.

In our business meetings also, and in all the duties connected with them, may our members make use of their gifts. As it is the Lord's work, let it be done as in His sight, in the peaceable spirit and wisdom of Jesus, with dignity, forbearance and love of each other.

"Dear Friends, keep all your meetings in the authority, wisdom and power of truth and the unity of the blessed spirit. Finally, dear Friends, let your conduct and conversation be such as become the Gospel of Christ. Exercise yourselves to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men. Be steadfast and faithful in your allegiance and service to your Lord, and the God of peace be with you."

Each Yearly Meeting or affiliated group of Yearly Meetings, such as the Five Years Meeting and Friends General Conference, has its own printed Discipline which includes about a dozen general Queries. These Queries are specific inquiries addressed to Monthly Meetings. In some places they are read annually or quarterly for the spiritual inspiration of the members; in other places they are answered annually in writing, and thus sent up to the superior Meetings to give a picture of the state of the Society. As they stand today, the Queries are the lineal descendants of many earlier ones which show the concern of the Society from early times for two things: the purity of the spiritual source, and the faithfulness with which the leadings of the Spirit are carried over into the business of life here and now. The Queries quoted here are those adopted in 1945 in tentative form by the last Five Years Meeting. They are due for adoption, probably without much alteration, in 1950,

and are the most recent expression of the largest section of Quaker thought in America.

## THE QUERIES

### *Introductory Statement*

The purpose of the Queries is to direct the attention of all to the true source of spiritual strength, to promote individual faithfulness to Christ, and to keep the church in a healthy condition. They are of value in appraising the state of society and in helping each member to determine through self-examination whether he is living a consistent Christian life. The Queries should be read frequently in private devotions and at specified intervals both in Monthly and in Quarterly Meetings.

#### A. GENERAL QUERIES

##### *Spiritual Growth*

1. Do you strive for the constant realization of God's presence in your life? Are you sensitive and obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit? Do you endeavor to advance your spiritual growth by the prayerful study of the Bible and other devotional literature?

##### *Meetings for Worship and for Business*

2. Are all meetings for worship and for business duly held and are you regular and punctual in attending them? Do you come with heart and mind prepared for communion with God and fellowship with one another? Do you individually assume your rightful share in the responsibility of the work and worship of the Meeting? Are your meetings for business, times of spiritual concern and prayerful search for the way of truth?

##### *Christian Fellowship*

3. Do you love one another as becomes the followers of Christ? Are you careful of the reputation of others? When differences arise, do you make earnest effort to end them speedily?

### *Home and Family*

4. Do you practice the daily reading of the Scriptures in your families, giving time for reverent meditation? Do you make your home a place of hospitality, friendliness, peace, and Christian fellowship? Do you promote the moral and spiritual life of your children through careful supervision of their education, recreation, and friendships?

### *Youth and the Church*

5. Do you seek the conversion and spiritual development of your young people? Do you endeavor to instruct them in the principles and practices of Friends? Do you strive to create a community life that will promote their mental and physical well-being?

### *Standards of Life*

6. Do you observe simplicity and moderation in your manner of living? Do you give proper attention to the rules of health? Are you careful to avoid all places of amusement that are inconsistent with Christian character? Do you practice total abstinence from tobacco, narcotics, and alcoholic beverages?

### *Business Responsibility*

7. Do you avoid such undue expansion of your business responsibilities as to endanger your personal integrity? Are you truthful and honest in your business transactions, punctual in fulfilling your promises, and prompt in the payment of your debts?

### *Missionary Enterprise*

8. Do you make diligent effort to acquaint yourselves and those under your care with the spiritual needs of the world? Do you support by prayer and systematic giving those who are laboring to extend Christ's kingdom? Do you use your spiritual gifts in serving humanity as God grants you light to see such service?

### *Peace*

9. Do you consistently practice the Christian principles of love and good will toward all men? Do you work actively

for peace and for removal of the causes of war? Do you observe the testimony of Friends against military training and service? Do you endeavor to make clear to all whom you can influence, that war is inconsistent with the spirit and teaching of Jesus?

*Attitudes in Racial Relations*

10. Does your attitude toward people of other races indicate your belief in their right to equal opportunity? Do you believe in the spiritual capacity of men of all races and do you recognize their equality in the sight of God? Are you aware of your responsibility as a Christian to help in the elimination of racial discrimination and prejudice?

*Social Conscience*

11. Are you concerned that our economic system shall so function as to sustain and enrich the life of all? Are you giving positive service to society in the promotion of peaceful methods of adjustment in all cases of social and industrial conflict? Do you as workers, employers, producers, consumers, and investors endeavor to cultivate good will and mutual understanding in your economic relationships? Do you intelligently exercise all of your constitutional privileges and thus seek to promote Christian influence locally, nationally, and internationally?



## *Quakers as Citizens*

Before treating the attitude of Friends toward education, race relations and peace, we must follow them from their meeting-houses and their homes into their duties as citizens. Indistinguishable from their fellows in their capacity as citizens, there may be something to remark in their conduct of business. From the earliest times Quaker shop-keepers adhered to one price for their goods and were scrupulously honest in their dealings. Indeed, in the seventeenth century, Quaker businessmen were watched carefully by committees of their Meeting to make sure that they adhered strictly to the ethical principles for which the young Society stood. The result of such oversight, whether actual or implicit through the years, has made for strict integrity and the production of honest goods. Of the nineteenth-century head of a large Quaker manufacturing company it was said: "Every such business-man helps to exalt the calling above the low level of mere money-getting, and clothes it with the dignity of service to the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

It is to be noted that the present-day use of the term "Quaker" in every sort of business may be taken as a tribute to the excellence of the products and the honesty of the dealings of the Quaker. After nearly three centuries there are few business houses entirely owned and

<sup>1</sup> Hannah Whitall Smith, *John M. Whitall, 1800-77*, Phila., 1879, p. 193.

staffed by Friends. Others have entered into the heritage of the Quaker name and sign. Put "Quaker" in front of the trade names and you will find in the Philadelphia telephone directory such listings as Bootblack Supply Co., Building and Loan, Ice Cream Co., Hair Goods Co., Meat Market, Printing Co., Rug Co., Shoe Repair, Tailor Shop, Upholstering Co., Worsted Co., etc. Quaker Oats and William Penn Whiskey are more widely known. Such frequent adoption of a religious society to give credit to a very secular business is not easy to explain unless some prestige is sought by the use of such an aegis. An amusing effect is produced if we imagine Congregational Ice Cream in Connecticut, Baptist Tailor Shop in Rhode Island, Catholic Soap Manufacturing Co. in Maryland, Christian Science Full Fashioned Hosiery anywhere or John Wesley Whiskey. Yet all these in Philadelphia have prefixed "Quaker" with impunity and apparently for the purpose of gaining good will. It is likely that in the popular mind "Quaker" calls up the figure of a plain, honest-looking man without the thought of any religious affiliation. It is the religious affiliation, however, and not the clothes which makes the Quaker honest.

The place to look for Quaker honesty and fair dealing is primarily in their places of business. Even today Friends seldom, too seldom, seek any part in representative government. This abstention from public office was forced upon them for two centuries in England, where tests by oaths were imposed for entrance into Parliament, the Judiciary and even into the universities until well down in the nineteenth century. These oaths Friends were unwilling to take. In the American colonies of Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and the Carolinas, however, the colonial constitutions pro-

vided for the tender conscience of the Friends, and in several cases they served acceptably as governors and other public officials. For the past century in England, too, Friends have been ably represented in Parliament and probably as much as their numbers warranted. The names of Bright, Pease, Baker and Harvey will be recognized by American Friends. In America, but one President, Hoover, has claimed membership in the Society of Friends, and the number of Quaker Senators and Representatives in Congress during the last century could probably be counted on the fingers of the two hands. There have also been few Quaker governors of States or other men of public prominence in recent times. The reason is not far to seek: the holding of a political office often brings the occupant into contact with unscrupulous persons and with situations which threaten the integrity of the consistent Friend. Friends have agreed with the remark of Mr. John Smaucker to Sam Weller: "If your destiny leads you into public life, and public station, you must expect to be subjected to temptations which other people is free from, Mr. Weller." But it is doubtful if the threat is so serious as to disqualify Friends from a place in representative and legislative assemblies and upon the Bench in America. Indeed, it might be urged that their example in certain cases might win the respect and regard even of associates whose standards were quite different from their own. Examples of personal integrity and professional rectitude are always needed in a democracy, and Friends have no right to deny their responsibility in so important a field of action.

In this connection we think of William Penn and ask, what of him? Penn had government thrust upon him by circumstances and, as a Quaker, would never have

sought the responsibility for himself under the conditions then prevailing in England. He was well prepared, however, to establish and govern a colony in America. His birth, his wealth and education all equipped him to embrace the unparalleled opportunity granted him by Charles II to found a Quaker commonwealth. His early charters, laws and "frames" were the direct application of Quaker principles to representative government for twenty-five years in New Jersey and for seventy-five years in Pennsylvania. This is because he wrote himself "Government seems to me a part of religion itself, a thing sacred in its institution and end." <sup>2</sup> Toleration, justice, democracy and national righteousness form the very essence of Penn's project for a state. On this point the historian Bancroft in his well-known eulogy wrote: "Penn did not despair of humanity, and though all history and experience denied the sovereignty of the people, dared to cherish the noble idea of man's capacity for self-government . . . His name is now wide as the world; he is one of the few who have gained abiding glory." <sup>3</sup>

It is not alone with honest goods and honest treatment of customers that Friends in business have been concerned. They have also felt marked responsibility for the fair treatment of employees. At the beginning of his career Fox was at Mansfield when he writes: "It was upon me to go and speak to the Justices, that they should not oppress the servants in their wages." Not only did he exhort the Justices "to do that which was right and just to them"; but he also says, "I exhorted the servants to do their duties, and serve honestly." The latter side

<sup>2</sup> *The Frame of Government of Pennsylvania, 1682.*

<sup>3</sup> *History of the United States*, Pt. II, chap. XVI.

of the bargain, which is so often overlooked nowadays, was equally important in Fox's mind if Capital and Labor were to agree. In earlier times many Quaker youths were apprentices and domestic servants. Efforts were made to place such young people with Quaker employers in order that they might be trained in a sympathetic manner and also be released from their duties for attendance at religious meetings.

The industrial revolution in England brought great changes in the relations of Capital and Labor. By 1800 many Quaker families had acquired wealth by wise investment of their economies in new enterprises. Paul H. Emden in *Quakers in Commerce* has given surprising evidence of the large part English Quakers played in the development and financing of new industries, including railways and private banks, insurance and the more homely necessities of matches, biscuits and cocoa. Already in the eighteenth century the Crowly iron-masters had set up "arbitration courts consisting of nominees of the firm and of the workers . . . to enquire into grievances; and contracts made between the master workmen and their hammer men were drawn up in these courts . . . A system of contributory insurance against death, sickness, and old age was compulsory on all workers; and a doctor, a clergyman, and a school-master were maintained jointly by the firm and its employees." <sup>4</sup> Both in England and to a lesser degree in America the Friends have been pioneers in establishing and maintaining good will and healthful working conditions. The model villages maintained by the Frys, Cadburys and Rowntrees in England are well known. They

<sup>4</sup> T. S. Ashton, *Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution*, Manchester and London, 1924, p. 196.

are the natural outcome of the practical Quakerism of George Cadbury who considered "that our people spend the greater part of their lives at work, and we wish to make it less irksome by environing them with pleasant and wholesome sights, sounds and conditions," and of Joseph Rowntree who refused to regard his workers "merely as cogs in an industrial machine, but rather as fellow-workers in a great industry." Though American Quakers have not produced any large model villages, their spirit as employers is not behind that of their English contemporaries. The best Quaker thought everywhere would unite with an American Friend who writes: "A business organization should be a unified group of people banded together to earn a living for its members, seeking to do justice among all of them and to the rest of the world." There should be offered to each member of the organization "an equal chance for each to rise to that level of reward and power for which he is qualified," and that chance is open to the apprentice as well as to the executive officers. We don't hear of strikes and violence in industry where such a spirit prevails at the top. Friends believe that "the human factor in business"—the patent desire to treat fellow-workers fairly and decently as fellow-men—holds the key to the labor situation. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, but you can let every man in industry feel that he has a fair chance to make the best of himself.

It is not hard to see that back of all this social concern is the Quaker belief in the inherent dignity of man and in his rights as a fellow son of God. It is the same principle we have seen at work in handling a minority opinion in a business meeting and which underlies the Quaker proposals for meeting international difficulties.

In many places in our day the solicitude of Friends for the social order is indicated by the existence of energetic social order committees. Housing conditions, slum clearance, fair employment practice, working conditions in home and factory, profit sharing, joint capital and labor management—these are some of the practical matters which are brought before their young people by means of week-end work camps and conferences.

Amelia M. Gummere in her study of *The Quaker in the Forum* (Phila., 1910) contains much of interest regarding the Quaker's modest part in American political life, especially during the colonial period. There has never been a Quaker political party nor a candidate officially sponsored by the Society. Friends do not talk politics, but they go to the polls and vote in accordance with their preferences. The support of the Society as a *bloc* is impossible, but would in any case be negligible.

But if the Friends have been slack in taking political positions themselves, their representative bodies watch like hawks the progress of national and state legislation. There is probably no group of Christians from whom lawmakers hear more frequently than from the Society of Friends. By maintaining an office in Washington, Friends are quickly apprised of legislative trends and can take immediate steps by correspondence to make known their position. When some more decisive measure seems necessary, a small deputation of Friends is appointed to wait upon the appropriate government official and present to him in person the "concern" of the Society for which they speak. Such a personal interview involves no argument or heated discussion. It is felt by both parties to be based upon a spiritual principle and

is almost always felt to be a satisfactory occasion by all participants.

The technique of such an interview, which has so often had favorable results, is very interesting. It consists of a declaration of good will, of sympathy for the heavy duties of the office, of hope that care will be given to the fundamental principles involved, and of faith that prayerful consideration will lead to a right decision. It is difficult for an official to be other than friendly toward such a friendly mission. He is grateful that his visitors do not turn on the heat. There is no resort to debatable arguments, no pressure, no attempt to compel. But the official finds himself with a very nice little problem of ethics laid in his lap. If he is a free agent and has any conscience at all, he is more apt than not to let his best nature act. That, of course, is exactly what the Friends want—to make the secular act follow from the convictions of the Light Within. So for centuries with their concern for justice, peace and toleration they have been accustomed to visit the great ones of the earth, even kings, queens, princes, even the Pope Pius VII, even the Berlin Gestapo in 1938, with good will on both sides and often with marked accomplishment. No Friend that we know of ever had a chance to tell Frederick the Great, or Napoleon or Hitler what he thought of him and his responsibility. It would have been interesting if such a frank interview could have been arranged. For Quaker records leave no doubt as to the powerful working of the Spirit when two parties meet upon the higher plane.

It is probable that every President of the United States has at some time sat with a small committee of Friends and listened to their representations on some



humanitarian subject: slavery, peace, treatment of the Indians, feeding of stricken peoples, admission of destitute refugees, etc. No such interview is better known than that of President Lincoln with Eliza P. Gurney and some companions in 1862. Lincoln felt for the Friends in their conscientious objection to war, and they felt for him with his crushing responsibilities. The President told them: "In the very responsible position in which I happen to be placed, being a humble instrument in the hands of our Heavenly Father, as I am, and as we all are, to work out His great purpose, I have desired that all my works and acts may be according to His will, and that it might be so, I have sought His aid; but if, after endeavoring to do my best in the light which He affords me, I find my efforts fail, I must believe that for some purpose unknown to me, He wills it otherwise." <sup>5</sup> Two years later he wrote to Eliza P. Gurney: "I have not forgotten—probably never shall forget—the very impressive occasion when yourself and friends visited me on a Sabbath forenoon two years ago. Nor has your kind letter, written nearly a year later, ever been forgotten." This letter of Lincoln's here quoted is preserved by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Even a great and busy man does not forget such an interview.

If we include foreign affairs and international relations in the category of politics, a still larger panorama of Quaker activity opens before us. Besides English sovereigns from Cromwell to Victoria, one recalls private conversations of Quaker ministers with the Sultan Mohammed IV, with King Bernadotte of Sweden, Peter

<sup>5</sup> In the *Memoir and Correspondence of Eliza P. Gurney*, Phila., 1884, p. 313 it is alleged by the editor that this substance of what Lincoln said was recorded by one of the party.

the Great, the Czars Nicholas I, Alexander I and Nicholas II, Maximilian I of Bavaria, Ferdinand VII of Spain and the sovereigns of Wurtemberg. The inclusion of other dignitaries of lower flight would greatly extend the list. The pains and dangers accompanying early "travel in the love of the Gospel" were often great. But on foot, on horseback, in post-chaises, in sleighs, and by slow sailing vessels, these inveterate travelers until 1830 had no better facilities than did St. Paul. Many crossed the Atlantic again and again when a voyage in a little ship of a few hundred tons burden was not undertaken for the benefit of one's health. One third of William Penn's companions in the *Welcome* in 1682 died of small-pox on the westward voyage. Stephen Grellet, the most indefatigable of these traveling ministers, covered nearly 100,000 miles, and many others not much less. There were Americans who died while traveling in England, Ireland and Germany; British Friends died in America and in the islands of the western sea. No consideration of comfort or convenience was allowed to interfere with their surrender to the call of service when it came.

This subject of "travel in the love of the Gospel," as it was called, affords an instructive example of the submission of the individual to the collective judgment of the Meeting. It is quite conceivable, for example, that a minister might be mistaken in the authority of his call to service outside the limits of his own Yearly Meeting. After long and prayerful consideration, in which he seeks to assure himself of divine guidance, he feels definitely called to service away from home. He must then submit his "concern" to his Monthly Meeting, and if it is for service abroad, also to the approval of his Quarterly Meeting and to the Meeting of Ministers and Elders or

of Ministry and Oversight. The purpose of this procedure is to guard against any possibility of a mistaken sense of duty on the part of the minister concerned. The sense of duty properly resides in the individual, but it is controlled and stamped with approval by responsible Quaker groups. Endorsement of the "traveling minute" by the superior Meetings records that the minister in question is "in unity" with these bodies of Friends and that he sets out with their cordial consent and approval. Fortified by such credentials the minister is welcomed wherever he may go among Friends both for his own sake and for the sake of those whom he represents and whose authority he bears. When he later returns this minute to his own Meeting which issued it, it should be endorsed with the approval of Friends among whom he has labored in his journeys.

Those so faring abroad among members of their own religious fraternity seldom see the inside of a hotel, and their possible expenses are limited to transportation. They are in great measure the guests of the community where they are visiting and enjoy the bountiful hospitality which has been a mark of Quakerism from the start. When, as often happened, a concerned Elder or other companion came forward to accompany a minister, the two traveled together and were in a position to form accurate judgments of the spiritual state of the Meetings they visited. There also exist very interesting accounts of extensive journeys thus undertaken by two women as companions.

Such interchange of hospitality and spiritual fellowship among people of essentially the same faith and manner of life has been of incalculable value in keeping Friends in touch with each other in different continents

and in keeping open the channels of communication between citizens of different nations even when at war. In the first and second World Wars the Friends both by formal epistles and by private correspondence have been able to maintain a precious contact with those on the other side. Every year back and forth the Friends of England, Ireland, France, Germany, the Scandinavian countries, China, Japan, Palestine, Australia and the Yearly Meetings in the United States exchange epistles of good will, sympathy and encouragement. An American diplomat in Europe once testified to the value of this kindly exchange of greetings and of personnel to which no one could object and which is so fruitful in promoting brotherly love across the frontiers.

The Executive Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee returning in 1944 from a visit to England and France observed: "Political events are likely to lead to sharp and critical misunderstandings even between England and the United States. It is particularly because of these strains that the nourishment of warm fellowship between us as members of a common faith is so important." Such a Christian brotherhood as exists individually between many English and American Friends is stronger than mere political ties. Already in the eighteenth century it explained the filial attitude of many Philadelphia Friends toward the mother country at the time of the American Revolution.

Such is the influence of a tiny religious group which is thoroughly international in its outlook on the world. One can but think how great a force of reconciliation would become effective if the powerful Roman Catholic Church and the international service clubs, through the channels that are open to them, were more concerned to

keep good will operative in times of international stress. The Quakers believe there can be no moratorium on good will and on the obligation to show it.

The best way to convey an appreciation of these international contacts maintained by the Society of Friends will be to quote in full a few recent general epistles. The reader may then judge for himself the spirit in which they are conceived, the responsibility that is felt and the heart-searching which accompanies their composition. They are read, of course, in the Yearly Meeting that receives them and are printed in the Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting that issues them. In printed form they reach a much larger public and their influence is correspondingly widened.

The first document is not technically an Epistle like the others, but a Letter from the Representative Meeting and the Representative Committee of the Philadelphia Yearly Meetings to the Members of the Religious Society of Friends. It concerns the peace testimony of the Society:

DEAR FRIENDS,

As we have considered anew our historic peace testimony and its significance in a world at war, we have desired to share with Friends everywhere our heart-searchings and our deep convictions on this inescapable subject.

We have felt that inherent in any forceful expression of our belief in the divine law of love, there must be a deep and concerned repentance for our present weakness as individuals and as a Society. As Friends, we have an ancient and clear-cut peace testimony contained in our respective Disciplines, but it is the cumulative mass of individual decisions that determines our real peace testimony and strengthens or weakens our corporate witness. Some, under deep

conviction, despairing of any peaceful solution to the present crisis, have temporarily abandoned their resistance to the way of violence. Too many of us have preached peace and failed to remove the seeds of war in our own lives.

In deep humility and exercise of spirit we reaffirm our faith that war is a denial of Christianity and we feel that each of us should consider with the greatest care the following questions:

Has my life as a citizen shown evidence of my sincere devotion to peace? Have I made my decision not only in the light of my own concerns but also with careful thought as to their effect on our Society and our community? Am I a loyal, concerned, active member of my Meeting? Am I doing my share in preparing my Meeting for the possibilities of new life inherent in the return of our young men and women?

Dear Friends, must we not all feel that this is an hour of testing which demands the best that we can give? The vast sufferings of the world are calling us to offer ourselves unstintingly in service. The wrongs and agonies wrought by war are crying out with compelling urgency for us to dedicate ourselves to the creation of an abiding peace of justice and brotherhood. But in these, as in other cases, our service, our plans, our enterprises will fail if the spirit fails.

It may be that the greatest thing any of us can contribute to the world today is the spirit we manifest in every word and deed. Shall we not together seek to increase the spiritual power of our Society of Friends by renewed individual faithfulness? Shall we not also join one another in striving to add to the forces of good which shall conquer the forces of evil that the war is generating? Shall we not try to let our loving-kindness shine more clearly and pray for more of that spirit of "everlasting love unfeigned" which is determined to "outlive all wrath and contention" and "to weary out . . . all cruelty"? Shall we not make our hearts the meeting-place of human suffering and the divine

compassion and in the life of the spirit become dedicated followers of the Prince of Peace?

"Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you all."

Sixth Month, 16, 1944.

The following is the Epistle of Irish Friends issued from Dublin in Fifth Month, 1945:

**TO FRIENDS EVERYWHERE:**

We were deeply moved in the opening session of our Yearly Meeting by loving messages received from Friends all over the world, and most of all from those of you who have faced trials and sufferings beyond our experience or comprehension. We are filled with thanksgiving on your behalf for your abounding faith, hope and love in these circumstances. We have thought of you, those of you who are cut off, living in isolated, lonely places, those who have suffered agony of body, mind and spirit, and those who, seeing the misery and bitterness of others, are giving help. You have passed on to us something which cannot be expressed in words.

From London came an epistle full of light and strength and cheer. Harry T. Silcock, recently returned from the Far East, has linked us to Friends in many lands—China, Japan, India, Australia, New Zealand and America.

We recognize with humiliation and shame how poor has been our response to the spiritual and material needs of the world today, and we believe that the deepening of your faith in the ultimate triumph of spiritual values will inspire us to more courageous and sacrificial service in the building of that new world of brotherhood for which we long.

The need for a deeper prayer-life has taken hold of us; a longing to open our hearts so widely to the inflow of Divine love and power that God may be able to use each member of our world-wide fellowship as an instrument of His heal-

ing and peace. We have many times thought of Christ's desire for His disciples that they all might be one, so that the world might know that He had been sent by the Father. We have been called to a fresh recognition of our essential unity with one another, with members of the world-wide Christian Church and with men of goodwill everywhere.

Roger C. Wilson lifted the curtain for a brief space and showed us something of the conditions of those on the Continent of Europe. We remember with love and gratitude all those who today are trying to rebuild the waste places, both materially and spiritually, and those who have risked and given all in obedience to the call that came to them in varying ways. Above the "ocean of darkness and death" we have caught a glimpse of the "ocean of light and life." May we with you stand still in the Light and so gain peace. Swift thoughts of warm affection have sped from us to you. We long for the day when personal contacts may be renewed.

"Dear Friends," wrote George Fox, "dwell all in the everlasting power of God and His life, in which is both unity, order, peace and fellowship."

Signed on behalf of the Meeting:

More brief is the Epistle of one of the youngest Yearly Meetings, that of Sweden held in 1945. Even in translation it is easy to recognize the international spirit of authentic Quakerism:

#### TO FRIENDS EVERYWHERE:

Swedish Friends rejoice in sending you greetings from the first Yearly Meeting of an international character held in our part of the world since the end of the war.

We also wish to thank you for your greetings, which were read aloud at the commencement of our own Meeting.

We had with us Friends from America, England, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Holland and French Madagascar. They helped us by sharing with us their deepest experiences



and their conception of future developments. They helped us furthermore by asking us to assist them with Friends' International Work. George Fox's words regarding an ocean of darkness became very real to us, and we lifted up our eyes in expectation of the ocean of light.

By examining ourselves, we came to review the history of our own Meeting during the last ten years. We discussed frankly the external and internal obstacles that prevented us from achieving complete fellowship with the group. We joined in praying God to keep us together in that fellowship that gives power to help each other, power to carry the witness abroad, power to do relief work in the world's hour of utmost need.

We began the Meeting, feeling that the tasks that we had already undertaken were beyond our strength, but with the increased sense of fellowship that we experienced, a new concern developed: help for the starving children of Germany.

Stockholm and Viggbyholm, Sept., 1945.

## *Education for Character*

Among the numerous humanitarian movements in which Friends have shared, there are three which stand out as permanent interests: education, social relations and peace. That the Quakers should be vitally interested in these three subjects was inevitable, for they are all concerned with a man's effort to realize the best of which he is capable under conditions of mutual respect for the personality of his fellow-men. Little need be said of the historical attitude of Friends toward these questions; only enough will be said to indicate that their attitude is of old time. What the modern reader may wish to know is how Friends face these problems today.

The early Quakers conceived of education as elementary and practical. As early as 1668 a school for boys and a school for girls were founded upon the advice of Fox, where the pupils should be instructed in "whatsoever things were civil and useful in the creation." Such a curriculum might become all-inclusive with time, and it has become so. But at the start Quaker education remained of practical service in gaining an honest livelihood. The young Society was anxious that its youth should be self-reliant and prepared morally to cope with the business of life. In the early schools the study of the classical curriculum was not emphasized, as all early Friends held that Oxford and Cambridge degrees were not necessary in order to preach the gospel of repentance

and salvation. The Society, however, was not totally destitute of scholarly men; for some university-trained men became Quakers through the preaching of the Publishers of Truth, while Latin, French and Dutch had a practical value as a means of communication in the days of the Quaker world crusade.

By 1691 there were fifteen Friends boarding schools in England; <sup>1</sup> others have been founded more recently. From the beginning until the present time many Monthly Meetings in England and America have had under their care elementary and even secondary schools to which Quaker parents were encouraged to send their children. Besides these local schools, there were in the nineteenth century in America a number of boarding-schools and academies, usually coeducational, where a "guarded education" was administered in a close community. With one or two possible exceptions all these Friends schools now accept non-Quaker pupils, and we shall inquire presently why this is the case. For it is through their schools and colleges rather than through any other agency that the Friends are favorably known and understood by thousands of their former pupils.

For fear of worldly influences and of intellectual pride, Friends' children were kept aloof from institutions of higher learning until the nineteenth century. Then the Quakers founded the first of such institutions in America at Haverford in 1833. There followed in order Guilford 1837, Earlham 1847, Swarthmore 1864, William Penn 1873, Wilmington 1875, Bryn Mawr 1880, Pacific 1891, Friends 1898, Nebraska Central 1899, Whittier 1901. Of these eleven colleges all but Haverford and Bryn Mawr are coeducational. Beside these,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, First Month, 1946, p. 55.

Cornell University, Johns Hopkins University and Brown University were founded by Friends but have never been under Quaker control. Excluded from Oxford and Cambridge until comparatively recent times, English Friends developed their own schools and institutions for specialized instruction to complement that of the Victorian Universities to which they were free to resort.

The question now arises, Why are Quaker schools and colleges frequented by so many patrons of other communions? Though Quaker education on the whole has favored the natural sciences and some handicrafts rather than belles lettres, there is nothing now peculiar about the curriculum of a Quaker institution of learning. Nothing is longer excluded from consideration because of its character. Friends and their patrons study the same subjects as other pupils in other schools. Handicrafts represent the Quaker belief in some practical skill, and the natural sciences are popular because they reveal the divine handiwork. But the whole field of art and science is open. Evidently it is not the curriculum which attracts non-Quaker patrons. It is rather the solicitude of the school for the welfare of the individual pupil. This does not mean the grooming of specialists to win scholarship prizes or the development of championship athletic teams. It means that the governing committees as well as the teachers or professors are individually selected with a view to their personal character and their interest in youth and in the ultimate aim of education to produce character and integrity. Youth is affected more by the walk than the talk of instructors. It is not the primary aim of a Quaker school to turn out "smart" graduates, but young people who know right from wrong

and who have the backbone to stand up for what they feel is right. Friends would cordially subscribe to the opinion of old Aldus Manutius the Elder in 1501 that "we must put forth every effort to the end that the young may be trained simultaneously in good morals and in the liberal arts. For the one result cannot be accomplished without the other. But if we were obliged to fail in one of these, I should give preference to the claims of morality rather than to those of even the highest culture."

Over a century ago Samuel Tuke prepared in successive years (1838-1842) five papers "On the Past Proceedings and Experience of the Society of Friends in Connexion with the Education of Youth." These lectures at Ackworth School, published at York in 1843, present an admirable picture of the ideas of Quaker education between 1660 and 1840. They can leave no doubt that Friends in England have on the whole favored boarding-schools, coeducation and financial assistance for the children of their own members. But most of all there is evident that solicitude for the spiritual and moral nature of youth which has persisted to this day in every Quaker school and college worthy of the Society.

The shortcoming of the tax-supported schools in America is not primarily in their intellectual standards, but in the total absence of any systematic instruction in religion and morals. The vast majority of our American youth is being raised with no knowledge of the Bible or of the moral bases upon which our civilization rests. The shocking conditions which prevail in many of our communities may be connected in some degree with this lack of religious and moral instruction in our public

schools. This fact is beginning to be recognized but not yet corrected. One may quote in this connection from a report to the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York by a Spécial Committee on Economical and Efficient Education. It is dated August 14, 1939: "We place *first* in our list of things necessary to produce 'the Schools New York State wants' a *deep, true, religious understanding and viewpoint* . . . This committee is convinced that the great lack in our homes and in our national life is the lack of true, simple religion . . . If this nation does not maintain its religious foundation, its whole structure will fall. When we say religious, we do not mean any particular church or sect. . . . The United States cannot have or maintain a right system unless it is based on true religious principles, and therefore, in spite of the fact that some hesitate to include religion in our educational program, we place it first."

Finally, any snobbishness which some might associate with a private school is pretty effectively dispelled by the attention given in all Friends schools to the injustices of the present social order and to the obligation of educated men and women in a democracy to try to correct them. To this concern for the social order and the problems posed by industry we may now turn our attention.

## *Concern for Social Order*

“Social Order” is the technical term which Friends employ to designate the living and working conditions prevailing in the communities where they dwell. As Auguste Jorns has pointed out, Friends have desired to create humane and dignified conditions of living as the first prerequisite of morality and of religious life.<sup>1</sup> To further this end Friends early set up loan funds for educating poor children, for establishing young men in business, dowry funds for beginning housekeeping, voluntary grants made to sufferers from fire loss, purchase of fuel or tools for those who had been dispossessed. In earlier times the dispensing of such aid was the function of committees set up for the purpose in both London and America. The policy throughout has been to help others to help themselves. When England was full of beggars, early Friends pointed out repeatedly that the costly extravagance of some would clothe and feed the needy.

The concern and responsibility felt by Friends for the Social Order is nothing new, though the response to this concern is now organized as never before. The sense of responsibility was, of course, inherent in the essential conviction of the Quakers already stated that all men are brothers and of equal importance in the divine sight.

<sup>1</sup> *The Quakers as Pioneers in Social Work*, N. Y., 1931, p. 98.

In so far as their small numbers and their limited sphere of action permitted, they originally concerned themselves with fair treatment in business, with justice in their dealings as citizens and with substantial assistance to the needy of whatever faith.

It has been briefly shown how British Quaker employers in the eighteenth-century Industrial Age planned for the welfare of their workmen and how they have continued their solicitude to the present time. The Cadbury, Rowntree and Fry chocolate firms in England are only the best known of modern Quaker philanthropists who have pioneered in providing generous living and working conditions for their employees. Temperance, Sunday Schools, Adult Schools, prison reform, humane treatment of the insane, anti-slavery are other movements which have claimed wide attention from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present time. We shall speak in the next chapter of peace and of international relief under the American Friends Service Committee. But the scope of this Committee has become so wide as to include some work of a local character looking toward the improvement of living and working conditions which properly belongs in our present treatment. Any condition which prevents the individual from realizing to the full his potentialities is looked upon by the Friends as calling loudly for correction. It is not so much unlawful conditions as those which are fostered by ignorance, avarice and carelessness which come under Quaker observation.

An admirable statement of the distinguishing principles employed in Quaker work has been recently made by Henry van Etten who for twenty-five years has been active in the social work undertaken by French Friends.



He has summed up these principles in the following terms: <sup>2</sup>

1. The unity of life in all its aspects.
2. There is no difference before God between spiritual and material work accomplished in the Spirit.
3. The meeting for worship is the source of all action.
4. Never to meet around a table for the sole purpose of "doing something."
5. One must first seek God's will and guidance.
6. The Divine Calls come both from without and from within.
7. Individual and group concern.
8. We must seek to understand and follow God's leadings, both external and internal.
9. Formation of a small committee and concerned Friends.
10. The drawing up of a serious plan, both theoretical and practical, without voting.
11. Financial questions and choice of workers. The drawing up of minutes and the scrupulous keeping of accounts.
12. The refusal to proceed with the scheme if workers qualified from the Quaker point of view are not forthcoming, even if the funds are to hand.
13. A piece of Quaker work must be conducted according to the Quaker spirit or else be dropped.
14. A piece of Quaker work must generally be directed by the concerned Friend, supported by the help and advice of a committee.
15. The "star complex" is incompatible with the Quaker spirit.
16. *Everything* must belong to *everyone* in a harmonious group.
17. Not to fear small beginnings.

<sup>2</sup> *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, Fourth Month, 1946, pp. 115-16.

18. Not to fear to sow, even if one knows one shall not reap.

19. Problems must be tackled from the practical side; material conditions must be improved before the spiritual element is introduced.

20. An attempt must be made to attack the causes of evil and not to be content with improving unsatisfactory conditions.

21. The Quaker social spirit is neither "philanthropy" nor "charity," neither is it traditional nor habitual; it is a spirit of solidarity and progressive education.

22. The Quaker spirit does not monopolize, but seeks to cooperate with all groups which are capable of collaborating.

23. One must be able to withdraw without flourish or show when a successfully initiated action can be taken up and continued by others, even outside the Society of Friends.

24. Friends must be able to accomplish tasks which are neglected by others, *all tasks being equal in the sight of God.*

The study of sociology and the many existing agencies for social welfare in our large cities have aroused nowadays general attention from public-spirited citizens. With such agencies the Friends have full sympathy. They are actively connected with the management of many of them dealing with unemployment, the cause and elimination of poverty, economic justice, cost of living, housing, education, public health, recreation, delinquency, care of ex-prisoners and intemperance. But they have developed some techniques and special interests of their own which are referred to in a recent report of The Social Order Committee and the Committee on Economic Problems of the two Philadelphia Yearly Meetings of Friends. It will here be seen how, in addition to looking after their own poor, aged and insane,

the Friends are now grappling with the wider forms of injustice and prejudice which afflict our civilization. To claim that all Friends have such a vital concern for the welfare of their neighbors would be grossly untrue. But it is a fact that in any Quaker community nowadays there will be found a substantial and effective group of persons who constantly keep this concern before their fellow-members and who work together to study the need and apply the remedy. The records show that this solicitude in one form or another is as old as the Society itself.

The following quotations from the Annual Report of the Social Order Committee for 1946, entitled "Friends and a Changing Social Order" reflect the educational work fostered by this Committee which is supported by appropriations from the two Philadelphia Yearly Meetings and by private individuals:

In a world of continuing distrust and conflict and fear of impending destruction, we are compelled to intensify our search for the right way to live. We report the activities of the Social Order Committee with a sense of inadequacy and yet with faith that teaching and practicing brotherhood and cooperation as best we can is in accordance with the Divine Will.

During 1945, twenty-six Volunteer Weekend Work Camps were held, with greater participation by high school and college students than at any time during the past five years. The project received an unusual amount of publicity this year with articles appearing in the Philadelphia Record, This Week Magazine, Magazine Digest, and the Senior Scholastic Magazine. This publicity has resulted in letters of inquiry and encouragement from various parts of the United States and one from as far away as South Africa. The value of the project, however, is not to be measured by

this publicity or by the tiny amount of painting and plastering that actually was done. In fact, it never can be measured, for the greatest value it has had can only be found in the spiritual growth of the tenants with whom our campers worked, of the owners whom we persuaded to furnish materials, and above all, of the campers themselves, who, to a degree at least, discovered the joyous adventure in a life committed to the purposes of God.

Again in 1945, two weeklong educational projects were held for high school students excused from classes. These projects provided close-ups of urban and minority and industrial problems by combining physical work with socially significant field trips. Seven Friends Schools and one public school, Germantown High, were represented.

Through the kindness of Friends who made their cabins available, four weekend conferences were held along the streams of South Jersey. These conferences provided opportunities to members of our Committees, representatives of labor and management, CPS men, and veteran weekend work campers to seek religious insight and strength to cope with our many social problems.

During the summer, a ten-week "Student in Industry Project" sponsored jointly with the American Friends Service Committee was held at the College Settlement in South Philadelphia. A dozen college students participated, combining first-hand industrial experience with cooperative living and an intensive educational program. It is our hope that a similar project in 1946 will develop into an all-year-round "Interning in Industry" project that will make a significant contribution to our industrial community.

A supper conference of the Business Problems Group enabled thirty Quaker business men to cross question Rhys Davies, a Labor Party Member of the British Parliament.

In December, our secretary helped to enlist a group of twenty-three representative ministers to urge mediation in one of Philadelphia's industrial strikes.

In the spring, a large interdenominational and inter-union "Religion and Labor Conference on Consumer Cooperation" was organized by our secretaries with the help of the Industrial Division of the Federal Council of Churches.

One outgrowth of the continuing educational work of our secretary with the Moorestown Consumers Cooperative has been the formation of an interracial and interfaith cooperative Federal Credit Union.

Visits were made by our secretaries to twenty-seven local Meetings in the Philadelphia area. On twenty-five of these occasions, delegations of work campers interpreted their experiences and on eleven occasions problems of industrial conflict were discussed. In addition, visits to eighteen Meetings were arranged for Committee members and other speakers.

After discussing at some length such subjects as the present demands of organized labor, the spread of the cooperative movement and the economic causes of war, the report ends on a religious note:

We who love peace and who also call ourselves Friends have an even more revolutionary responsibility. We must face up to this question posed by Jesus: "For which is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth?" and we must decide, as unequivocally as Jesus did: "But I am among you as he that serveth." Are we to be counted among those who sit at meat while others are hungry and exploited? Or are we to be counted among those who serve, among those who seek to build an economic system based upon service, a social order based upon brotherhood and cooperation? Our actions are what count.

## *Race Relations*

Until recent years the only two races with which American Friends have had close relations in the homeland have been the Indians and Negroes. The history of *Friends and the Indians* has been adequately treated by Rayner W. Kelsey in his study bearing that title (Phila., 1917). It will only be necessary here to remind the reader of the outline of this long story.

Friends in England of course knew nothing at first-hand about American Indians except what they heard from the early colonies and what they observed for themselves as they traveled up and down the eastern seaboard in the third quarter of the seventeenth century. The conversion of the natives to Christianity was advertised by Spaniards, French and English alike as one of the objects of American colonization. But this object hardly stood up against more selfish aims, and before William Penn's experiment, exploitation and debauchery marked the contact of Europeans with the Red Men. Though the traveling Quaker preachers from the first recognized the Indians as brothers, were kindly treated by them, and in return were solicitous for their spiritual welfare, yet Penn was the first to make just and kind treatment of the Indians the key-stone of his colonial plans. He wrote to them with friendly understanding and good intentions by his first emissaries, before he ever left for Pennsylvania himself. Later, after making treaties with them,

he wrote an extensive comment to the Free Society of Traders in 1683 upon the persons, language, manners, religion and government of the Indians. Penn found that the Indians of his territory "believe a God and immortality, without the help of metaphysics." For the Quaker this was sufficient to insure kind treatment throughout the years of Quaker control of the Pennsylvania Assembly from 1682 until 1756. For the more requiring Christians of some other colonies this modicum of faith was not enough to protect the Indians from fire and slaughter.

As a result of the widely recognized good will shown them by Pennsylvania Quakers, the Indians trusted them to a degree unknown by other colonists, and chose them after 1750 as their counsellors and advocates with the non-Quaker government of the later eighteenth century. In early years Penn specified that the paths should be open to Indians and whites alike, that their houses and wigwams should be open to each other, that the Indians could live in the settlements of the whites if they so desired, that the Indians should be protected from exploitation and debauchery, and that justice should be guaranteed by mixed juries in cases of wrongdoing. In short, Penn intended that the Red Men should be treated "like white men." The reason for this attitude is of course found in Penn's religion as expressed to the Indians: "This great God has written his law in our hearts, by which we are taught and commanded to love, and to help, and to do good to one another."

Through the eighteenth century sporadic preaching missions were undertaken by eastern Friends among the Indians, but without very marked results in conversions. But at the end of the century a more lively concern for

the welfare of the retreating Indians took hold of the Society. Since 1795 Friends have been unceasingly desirous that the Indians should be justly treated by the Government, that they should be instructed and aided in the arts of civilization, and that in so far as opportunity offered, they might receive religious instruction. Following them westward into their reservations, the Friends have provided agents, schools and Meetings for their charges. At Washington Quaker committees worked all through the last century to secure better treatment of the nation's wards, and finally under President Hoover two Philadelphia Friends at last gave them most sympathetic treatment as Commissioners of Indian Affairs. It is true to say that Friends have carried the Indians upon their hearts for a century and a half, while on their part the Indians still revere and trust the descendants of Onas, as they called their friend Penn. The story of the Quaker relations with the Indians presents a bright page in the rather sordid account of our national treatment of the oldest Americans we know.

We have seen that the Quaker concern for just and fair dealings with the Indians began with their first contact in the New World. But a sense of justice toward the Negro was surprisingly slow to develop as a corporate conviction among the Friends. There is one reason for this: the Indian since the sixteenth century had aroused some admiration among Europeans as being the prototype of the Noble Savage. The literary creation of this false but popular character is well known to students of literature. There was a certain rugged nobility attaching to the free roving figure of the American Indian. This favor the Negro did not possess at all. He was universally thought of as a slave, furnished by Providence and the



slave drivers to cultivate crops in the undermanned colonies overseas. Even the sensitive Quakers were slow to recognize in the humble African a brother in the sight of God.

The first page in the long history of Friends and the Negroes is found in Fox's Journal recording his visit to Barbados in 1671. Here he found, probably for the first time in his experience, black slaves in abundance. His concern for them was that they "might come to the knowledge of the Lord," that they might be treated mildly and gently by their overseers, and that "after certain years of servitude" they might be set free. There is here no overwhelming horror involving human slavery, but rather the desire to make the best of a necessary institution.

The first important action taken anywhere was that of some "German Friends" in Germantown, Pennsylvania. This was in 1688. They felt and said that slavery violated the Golden Rule, encouraged adultery and caused cruel treatment, and then they inquired with a real sense of guilt "if this is well done, what shall we say is done evil?" This significant query was passed up through the Philadelphia Meetings to which it was referred like a hot potato until by the Yearly Meeting "it was adjudged not to be so proper for this Meeting to give a positive judgment in the case, it having so general a relation to many other parts, and therefore at present they forbear it." In all truth it must be said that this supreme court of American Quakerism at the time was not ready to declare itself against the interest of so many of its members.

A few years before the letter of the "German Friends," the Free Society of Traders, of whom Penn was an in-

terested member, had published the articles of settlement for their 20,000 acres in Pennsylvania. As Janney points out,<sup>1</sup> there were two provisions in their constitution which distinguish plainly between black and red men: "Black servants to be free at fourteen years end, on giving to the Society two-thirds of what they can produce on land allotted to them by the Society, with stock and tools; if they agree not to this, to be servants till they do." With this stern provision we must contrast the engagement of the "Society to assist Indians settling in towns, with advice and artificers."

In a will of 1701, which never had effect, Penn provided for the freedom of his own blacks, but before his death in 1718 Philadelphia Friends had got no further than setting up meetings for worship to which black slaves were invited once a month. But as the eighteenth century progressed, the institution of slavery and the slave trade got progressively deeper beneath the skin of American Quakers. In the education of the Society, John Woolman, Anthony Benezet, Benjamin Lay and Ralph Sandiford were active agents. Woolman's conscience suddenly aroused, knew no peace until his brethren began to respond to his public remonstrances. Benezet wrote voluminously and by his own acts devoted himself to the anti-slavery cause. Friends in Pennsylvania and New Jersey were clear of holding slaves just a century after the first troubling of conscience in Germantown. The legal abolition of slavery in Pennsylvania began in 1780. It was nearly another century before Lincoln's proclamation freed the slaves in the United States in January, 1863. In the nineteenth-century struggle such Friends as Whittier and Lucretia Mott labored valiantly, while

<sup>1</sup> *Life of William Penn*, Phila., 1852, p. 184.

the *Reminiscences* of Levi Coffin (Cincinnati, 1876) give a vivid picture of the part of the Friends in the activities of the Underground Railroad between the slave states and Canada.

Both in America and England the anti-slavery party bore testimony against the evils of the institution by declining to use the products of slave labor. With the long struggle in Parliament many distinguished people were connected: Fowell Buxton, Macaulay, Cowper, Clarkson, Sharp, William Allen and especially the indefatigable Wilberforce. At last in 1833 after progressively alleviating measures, not only the slave trade but human slavery itself was outlawed in the British dominions, and after forty years of voluntary deprivation Friend William Allen got sugar again for his tea.

Of course, the problem presented by the black race in America was far from being settled by Lincoln's proclamation. In the immediate confusion and displacement of the ex-slaves, Friends were prominent in the formation of Freedmen's Associations for their protection, education and practical training. They have been prominent ever since as the Negroes have come north in increasing numbers and thus brought the problem to the very doorstep of northern Friends. Not only education, but efforts to secure fair treatment of our colored citizens in employment and in housing have marked the attitude of many Friends.

How far the mingling of whites and blacks shall go is a matter of individual opinion. There are some Friends who will not go as far as others. For most Friends the question involved is one of fairness and justice, of equal opportunity and compensation for the individual within the limits of his capacity. The keenest discussion has

lately centered about the admission of colored pupils in Friends private schools and colleges. In spite of apprehension in some quarters, it cannot be shown that the admission of such students has had any regrettable effect upon either morale or patronage. This is a question which has put Friends "upon the spot," and some very healthy and forthright discussion has been heard in certain communities. There cannot be much doubt about what the historic doctrine of Friends calls for in this case, and what the Negroes are justified in expecting from a religious group which has so long and so often espoused their cause.

The second World War aroused the sympathy of American Friends for the displaced Japanese-Americans who were in war relocation centers or who were otherwise the victims of circumstances. For many years the Friends had maintained flourishing missions in Japan, and when compelled by the war to leave, they transferred their interest to the Japanese in Hawaii, California and other western states. Those who were in confinement were visited and comforted in their interrupted lives; those who could be brought east were aided to find employment or to continue their education. This very practical evidence of good will has been carried on partly by missionary organizations and partly by the American Friends Service Committee. This most recent episode concerning displaced Japanese-Americans is but a chapter in the long history of Quaker concern for the victims of social and political conditions over which they have no control. The religious philosophy which motivates all this history is briefly but admirably set forth in the Conclusion of Jorns' *The Quakers as Pioneers of Social Reform*.

Due to their small numbers, the Friends have no very impressive exhibit in the field of foreign missions. Compared with many other religious denominations, their undertakings have been modest. We have seen, however, that the spread of the Gospel in foreign lands occupied the very first generation of Quakers, and since 1800 the missionary spirit has led to a Quaker investment of money and personnel in numerous parts of Asia and Africa. British Friends have supported work in India, China, Madagascar and Syria; American Friends have worked in Cuba, Mexico, Japan, China, Palestine and on the continent of Africa.

## *In Peace and War*

None of their "testimonies" is so closely associated with Friends in the public mind as that relating to peace. Of all the historic peace churches, many of them much larger than the Society of Friends, the Quakers are probably the best known and understood. That being the case, it will not be necessary to present here any arguments for the Quaker position. Arguments do not win converts anyhow. There is place, however, for a brief review of the history of the Quaker attitude toward war. It will be seen that the emphasis has shifted in the course of three centuries.

Until comparatively recently war was the business of professional soldiers. The civilian population was not involved as combatants, but merely as sufferers in an existing situation. The professional ranks had, of course, to be recruited by persuasion or by impressing unwilling victims into service. It was in this connection that we hear of the first Quaker confronting representatives of the military. It was at Derby in 1650, when the forces of the Commonwealth were at war with Charles II. Fox says he was in the House of Correction when he was asked "if I would not take up arms for the Commonwealth against Charles Stuart? I told them I knew from whence all wars arose, even from the lust, according to James' doctrine; and that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars."

That means that Fox felt he dwelt in a power which removed all human enmity from his heart. He continued, "I told them I was come into the covenant of peace which was before wars and strifes were." There was no use in arguing with a man who was so sure of himself as that, and he was ordered to be put "into the dungeon amongst the rogues and felons." This was not a case of being formally drafted and refusing to serve; Fox was kept in prison because he made the military angry by his answer to their offer. Those who became Quakers in the first decade needed to make no declaration of their peace testimony. It was implicit in their new convictions. Those who were converted while in the army simply resigned and went home.

In 1660, however, a more inclusive and definite statement was made to Charles II by George Fox and five other Friends: "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or pretence whatever; this is our testimony to the whole world. The Spirit of Christ by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing of evil, and again to move us into it; and we certainly know and testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us unto all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdom of this world . . . Therefore we cannot learn war any more."

The two declarations just quoted both base Fox's refusal to take part in war upon purely religious grounds. William Penn in 1693 in more secular terms pointed out that all wars arise from one of three causes: the desire to hold on to something that another wishes to take

away; to get back something that has already been taken away; or to get something from another to which one has no right. If these causes are applied not only to territory or privilege, but also in the domain of ideologies, we have the origin of wars pretty well accounted for. The Quaker refusal to fight has continued to be based upon religious grounds right through to the present day. In that respect it differs from the purely humanitarian motive of some other citizens. There have always been individuals in the Society of Friends who did not go along with the corporate sentiment of their fellow-members in this respect. But the corporate testimony has remained steadfast. In 1804 London Yearly Meeting proclaimed that "no plea of necessity or of policy, however urgent or peculiar, can avail to release either individuals or nations from the paramount allegiance which they owe unto Him who hath said, 'Love your enemies.' " This declaration is absolute and admits of no qualifications or extenuating circumstances.

The point at which the Quaker attitude toward war becomes unintelligible to many Christians is where it finds itself in conflict with the popular interpretation of patriotism. The Quakers have always been patriotic in the sense of being obedient and respectful to constituted authority. But they have never been patriotic to the extent of sacrificing their principles to the will of a majority. They have never been able to conceive of their God as a tribal or national deity whose blessing upon war may be confidently invoked. In war-time this emergence of a national God seems to be a normal phenomenon among many Christians of all nations. But to the Quakers it seems that the interest of their God transcends all seas and boundaries; to alter Pascal's



phrase, they think that what is truth on one side of the Pyrenees is truth also on the other side. When feeling runs high and the passions are aroused, it is hard to make other Christians appreciate the reasonableness of this.

Friends have never got away from the conviction that war is organized murder of one's fellow-men and that it is categorically forbidden by the teachings of Christ in the New Testament. But they have gone further in maintaining that the attempt to secure the triumph of right through the application of physical force is based on a false philosophy. In 1920 London Friends again spoke out during the first World War: "Our conviction is that Christianity has this to say to the world: 'Your reliance upon armaments is both wrong and futile. Armaments are the weapons of organized violence and outrage. Their use is a denial of the true laws of good living. They involve the perpetuation of strife. They stand in the way of the true fellowship of men. They impoverish the peoples. They tempt men to evil, and they breed suspicion and fear and the tragic consequences thereof. They are therefore not legitimate weapons in the Christian armory nor are they sources of security. You cannot foster harmony by the apparatus of discord, nor cherish good will by the equipment of hate. But it is by harmony and good will that human security can be obtained. Armaments aim at a security in isolation, but such would at best be utterly precarious, and is as a matter of fact, illusory. The only true safety is the safety of all, and unless your weapon of defence achieves this work, or works towards this, it is a source of antagonism, and therefore of increased peril.' " A good deal has happened since 1920 which lends authority to these words.

Between the European wars of religion and our war of 1861-65 most wars had been for territorial aggrandizement or for dynastic prestige. In either case the Quakers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not feel greatly concerned. They could stay on the side-lines and leave the fighting to professional soldiers. There were, to be sure, some "Fighting Quakers" in the American Revolutionary army, but most American Quakers felt bound to their brethren in England by such strong cords of affection that they remained aloof from actual fighting and in consequence suffered both mentally and physically. But the war in which the issue of human slavery was raised in our own land stirred Friends deeply, and not a few felt that the cause was more important than their inherited testimony against war.

We often use the expression "with heart and soul." There are perhaps two kinds of men who go into war: those who go into it with heart and soul, with physical and spiritual zest, because they like to fight or because they are convinced of the justice of their cause; and those who without heart and soul go to war because everyone is doing it or because they have to do so, who deplore the whole institution of war but don't see any way to avoid it. In our day the former category is certainly on the decrease and the latter on the increase. In the latter category are a great many men who would gladly use some less awful method to attain a good purpose, who would gladly channel their energies into a self-sacrificing effort to overcome evil with good. The destruction of personality has become so complete, the curses attendant upon war have become so evident and its consequences so appalling that many doubt its effectiveness to produce even the desired good.

By 1917 the emphasis in the thinking of the historic peace churches had shifted. Their youth were no longer satisfied to stand off passively and protest against war. They would not fight, but they wanted to do something equally self-sacrificing that should be constructive and productive of good will. Mennonites, Brethren and Quakers were all in the same boat. They held similar testimonies against war, but the Government did not recognize any substitute for war service. In order to make clear how the Quakers came in at this point, it will be necessary to tell a little history in a few words.

After the Crimean War British Friends had extended help to Finland, and during the Franco-Prussian War a considerable organization of relief was developed by them for the French civilian population. In about eight months 75,000 pounds was contributed for supplies which were dispensed by a personnel of forty men and women assigned to the territory between the Loire and the northern frontier.

This experience with practical relief proved of great value when British Friends in World War I organized their corps of ambulance drivers at the front, their system for civilian relief in France and assistance for aliens interned in England. This is a long and beautiful story which should be read for itself. It is referred to here because of the influence of these activities of British Friends upon American Friends in 1917 after the United States entered the war as a belligerent.

The draft law of 1917 caught the Quakers napping. Years had gone by without serious war affecting the United States. There was a general, though unwarranted, feeling that man had got past such barbarism. But in the presence of the grim reality Friends all over

the country awoke with a start. Though some of their youth were keen to take an active part in a "war to end war," there was urgent necessity of providing a form of service which should satisfy those who were prepared to follow the ancient Quaker testimony against war.

After some rough treatment of conscientious objectors who were drafted in military camps, an arrangement was made with the War Department by which such draftees were furloughed to the newly-formed American Friends Service Committee to be trained for various types of reconstruction and relief service abroad. Such was the origin of a Committee which in thirty years has come to be so widely recognized and supported. Its first business was to arrange for the training at Haverford College in the summer of 1917 of several hundred young men from all over the country. The training was in French language and history, sociology, care and repair of farm implements, automobile mechanics and carpentry. The daily program beside formal studies included worship, cooperative housekeeping, athletic drill, special lectures and a strict schedule of military exactness. As fast as they were prepared, these young men were shipped to northern France until there were about six hundred of them there when the war closed. Demountable houses were erected, hospitals staffed, fields plowed and sown, domestic animals reared, ambulances were driven in territory just evacuated by the retreating Germans. Later a huge quantity of United States Army matériel was acquired at a cheap figure and distributed to needy peasants in the devastated areas. This work of volunteers was, of course, not paid, but the overhead costs of training, transportation, maintenance, supplies

and materials were furnished through the A.F.S.C. by its host of contributors.

Similar agricultural and social reconstruction, as well as typhus prevention, famine relief and child feeding was carried on successively in Serbia, Poland, Austria, Russia and Germany. The story of this "Service of Love in War Time" is a fascinating one to those who are more interested in constructive than in destructive efforts. In the course of this service which covered about six years and included also some young women of good will, there was developed a large number of expert social and relief workers. They have since proved a real asset in meeting the demands of more recent years. A large number of Friends have proved to be ready to lay aside every weight and hasten when called to the scene of some crying need for their experience. As an international agent of good will the A.F.S.C. has an advantage over even the Red Cross in war time, because its impartial assistance, detached from all Governmental affiliation, has been solicited and trusted by nearly every country of Europe.

When the social and physical mess created in Europe by World War I had been somewhat cleaned up, there was serious talk of disbanding the A.F.S.C. It appeared to some that the work for which it had come into being was done. Happily, other counsels prevailed and it continued to occupy itself for the following years with domestic problems: communities disrupted by the depression, strikes and changed labor conditions called for personnel and funds for education, social reconstruction, training in new arts and crafts. The opportunity to engage in such work, as well as to share in the adventure of summer peace-caravans, has been well adver-

tised among Quaker youth, and many have shared in what was felt to be a useful experience. The program for the summer of 1946 set up by the A.F.S.C. included fifteen "projects" to be tackled by the work camps organized for young people of both sexes. The camps were located at strategic places between New England and the Pacific coast. Several helped in erecting and reconditioning buildings and in improving the recreational facilities for selected Negro and interracial communities. It is believed that these camps and others in Mexico offer young people of good will over fifteen years of age an opportunity to better the social, economic and spiritual conditions of the communities selected.

The consequence of an uninterrupted organization for peace and conciliation from 1917 to 1939 was that American Friends, like British Friends, were all set for war relief. There was, however, one great difference from the standpoint of young conscientious objectors. This time men of draft age in America were prevented by law from volunteering for foreign service, as they would have liked to do. Some got to China and elsewhere before the law became operative, but in general C.O.'s were compelled to stay in this country. They were furloughed this time to camps set up and maintained by the Brethren, Mennonites and Quakers to engage in "work of national importance." A few thousand young men of various religious sects, and some of none at all, were segregated in widely separated camps under community discipline to work at forestry, fire-fighting, drainage, soil conservation, etc. To many, longing to make a more active and exacting contribution, this work was thoroughly unsatisfying. A number left the camps and went to prison in preference, where there were already

under two- to five-year sentences those who had refused even to register for the draft, but who had handed themselves over to their local draft-boards for punishment.

The oversight and maintenance of the six Civilian Public Service camps administered by Friends caused a heavy drain upon the Society and was a main responsibility of the A.F.S.C. from 1941 to 1945. It was the policy of Selective Service at first not to allow the C.O.'s to indulge their preference or use their skills, but to keep them secluded at distasteful work. Later, under constant pressure from the C.P.S. camps, several hundred men were furloughed for more useful work on farms, in medical experiments and in reformatories, hospitals and insane asylums. It is in this last distressing and often loathsome work that their contribution received the highest encomiums. Differing from the treatment of C.O.'s in England, the American C.O.'s were not allowed to receive any remuneration. Their support as well as the support of their families at home fell in many cases upon the Society or Church to which they are attached. They will eventually all be discharged as from military service, and those in prison for refusing to register under the draft law will finish their prison terms. Thus another chapter in the history of the relations of the individual conscience to Governmental constraint will be terminated.

While Friends were wrestling at home with the exigencies of the draft law, they were also sending funds and workers to care for the children and hapless refugees in Spain and southern France. Later, as World War II progressed, relief work and feeding was carried further in France, as well as in Italy, Austria, Holland, northern Africa, and at the time of writing to Finland. During

1945, 282 tons of clothes, shoes, bedding and soap were shipped to Europe. Clothing, food and medicines have been sent also in large quantities to China and India. Naturally, constant pressure was exerted in Washington by Friends and many others to open up further opportunities for feeding Europe before the war ended. If this advice had been followed, instead of the British policy prohibiting food importation into France during the war, perhaps the later state of famine might have been averted.

The American Friends Service Committee has served a great purpose, not only in alleviating the physical and spiritual distress of the world, but also in drawing together in a common cause all sorts and stripes of Friends in America. It has been the greatest development in the Society during this century. It has taught all Friends that they can work together and spend millions of dollars without taking a vote but by submitting their individual judgment to such leading as they have always attributed to the Inner Light. To engage in humanitarian work without sustained religious support may delude some for a while. But Friends know that any success in their service to their fellow-men is dependent upon their faithfulness and their obedience to the Light Within.

As the Chairman says in the annual report of the A.F.S.C. for 1945: "This report of Quaker service is not about famous people or spectacular events. All the activities here described have, however, a distinctive spirit. They rest upon the philosophy of reconciling good will, upon the recognition of God's image in man." It is interesting to find in the report that in spite of all the detailed relief set forth, "the Committee feels constrained to emphasize that its basic aim is not solely to give mate-



rial aid but to bring a spiritual ministry of hope and fellowship to those who suffer." That conviction rings true to the historic tradition of Quaker solicitude for human sufferings and may well be borne in mind by those who are attracted by the work of this important Committee whose budget for the fiscal year ending in 1948 was about five million dollars.

## *Conclusion*

Anyone who has read the preceding pages will feel that the Quakers of today are very different from their forerunners of three centuries ago. They are different mainly in their reaction to the society about them. The call for repentance for sin was at the very center of the message of the first Quaker ministers as they went through the British Isles and other lands. They called upon men to renounce their sins and come to the Light Within which would lead them into Truth and Unity. This message was then needed and it was uttered fearlessly in scorn of personal consequences.

Though in many respects political and social conditions are far better now than they were three centuries ago, we are still very far from having developed a Kingdom of God. There is still much to arouse fear for the future of both the individual and the nation. But we have become more reluctant to hear and to talk about sin. We have become more tolerant and look rather for economic and social conditions to explain so much that is ugly and wrong.

With the coming of this tolerance, the sharp line which formerly distinguished righteousness from unrighteousness has been rubbed out. We think of ourselves with humility as all being in the same boat, and few indeed are those who would stand up and accuse their contemporaries of being sinners. The Quakers,

then, know that they are no better than other people, though they believe they have the spiritual answer to the questions disturbing men's minds and hearts today. The message of Quakerism is now addressed not to sinners who by tacit consent have been eliminated as a class, but to seekers. These seekers are individuals here and there who are looking for a satisfying faith and who are willing to practice the implications of this faith as their contribution to the betterment of human relations.

Those who have received a gift freely as a birthright do not always appreciate its value; those to whose condition Quakerism speaks in these latter days will perhaps cherish it more faithfully. Indeed, it is certain that there are many Christians in other communions, or in no communion at all, who are better Friends than those who call themselves by that name.

The purpose of this volume is not to disturb any who find in their present religious affiliation the satisfaction of their needs. Rather is it to show what Quakerism has to offer for the consideration of those who, as William Penn said of the Seekers in the seventeenth century, have forsaken "all visible Churches and Societies, and wandered up and down, as sheep without a shepherd, and as doves without their mates." In other words and in modern words, it may be shown for the help of some where Quakerism comes in.

Friends have never been interested primarily in recruiting members for their own Society. It has been shown that they observe no qualifying outward ceremony such as water baptism or the communion table or the acceptance of a creed. What Friends have tried to do is so to worship and live out their faith that others may be attracted to live "soberly, righteously and godly in

this present world." This is not easy to do, as was sensed by the little Quaker boy who in a probably apocryphal story surprised his parents by saying that when he grew up he was going to be a soldier because it was too hard work to be a Quaker. There is nothing more effective for good than a good example. But such examples do not necessarily arouse inquiry or bring in recruits. The Society of Friends has been a respected fellowship for the past two hundred years without growing in numbers.

This fact is explained not only by the reluctance of Friends to use any pressure upon others in making a spiritual decision. There are other reasons for the small numbers of the Society. The first is that since 1737 children born of Quaker parents have been declared "birth-right members" of the Society. That has been the chief source of membership. But it has had evident drawbacks and has been now rejected by several Yearly Meetings. It is a subject which demands the best thought of Friends everywhere. The most acceptable alternative is a provision for the associate or junior membership of children until they reach a fixed age of discretion and can then make a formal choice of their religious affiliation. As it is now, there are too many nominal Friends who never will give up their membership, but who do absolutely nothing to support or share in the life of the Society.

Another reason for the small numbers of the Society is the ruthless manner in which its Discipline was administered through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In an attempt to keep their skirts clear, Monthly Meetings "disowned" hundreds of members for alleged moral delinquencies, for engaging in military service, but chiefly for marrying "out of meeting." From the

standpoint of numbers, the last reason was the most disastrous. It drove from the Society uncounted persons who carried away with them all their offspring in the next generation. It is unspeakably sad to think of all the good people who have been lost to Quakerism through the application of a two-century purge.

With this much explanation, it may be said that the Quaker paper membership in the United States is approximately 115,000 divided into about 1000 congregations. There are about 20,000 members in the British Isles, 700 on the Continent of Europe (mostly of recent origin), 2000 in the Far East, and enough more in Australia, New Zealand, Madagascar, Palestine, etc. to make a grand total of about 160,000.

When the reader realizes that in the United States, Friends represent less than one-tenth of one percent of the population, he may well wonder why anyone should take the trouble to write of them. The reason is that they have been influential out of all proportion to their numbers. Moreover, they are recognized to possess certain phases of Truth of which the world stands now in painful need: the absence of an exacting creed is welcome to some people; the value of silence in worship is increasingly felt by Christians; the helpful outreach of charity across the seas is generally approved in these days of famine and despair; the desire to live at peace with all men is widespread; the principles of Quaker education for character are shared by many; there are some people who feel the importance of moderation and temperance in their scale of living. But, I think, the chief attraction of Quakerism if properly understood, is its center within the individual. Christ and all that Christ stands for in our idealism is in the human heart. We

depend upon nothing but the inner Witness to his presence. It is not possible to overthrow this faith; it is too simple and too central to be overthrown. One may neglect this presence, one may forget it, ignore it or defy it. But one cannot outgrow it or become so "smart" as to deny its existence. One cannot say, "I used to believe in Christ within me, but I know too much to do so now." The collapse of their faith happens sometimes to people who put their confidence in less certain earthen vessels or in historical records. But there is no use in trying to shake the faith of a man who *feels* his God within him: such a man is immune.

In the preceding pages it has been made clear that concerned Friends are far from being satisfied with the faithfulness of their own members. In practice they have fallen far short of their ideals and of the example set them by those who first followed Fox's interpretation of the Christian gospel. They yearn for a more faithful and spiritually aggressive observance of their tenets within their own membership. They desire that their young people shall carry on the responsibility attaching to their membership in the Society, and there is good evidence at present that many of them are doing so. They desire, too, to establish contact with all people of good will who conceive of Christianity as a way of life based on a vital experience of Christ within them. For it has been well said that "when a religious body like the Society of Friends is obliged to depend upon the birth of children within its membership as the main source of its new members, it cannot be sure of maintaining a succession of persons well fitted to bear the burden of leadership."<sup>1</sup> And the contribution of the Society of

<sup>1</sup> A. Jorns, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

Friends has been such that it must persist and continue to furnish spiritual leadership. Looking ahead a quarter of a century, it has been said: "This Society of Friends of 1970 can be a tremendous power in the world of tomorrow if enough of us dedicate our lives to that task. Even if feebly at first, God help us in our hearts to begin where we are, here, today."

If we look to the future, it may well be that the spiritual leadership of Quakerism will come from the groups in northern and central Europe. In America we have the weight of numbers and of material resources, and we have the attendant weight of responsibility. But the smaller groups in Europe from Scandinavia to France possess the imagination, the faith and the spiritual vitality to do great things. Uninhibited by a long period of contented Quietism, they have been stripped of this world's impedimenta and live in a freer air. Not ignorant of physical privation and of mental torture, they have passed through a fiery furnace without losing their loving kindness and their dynamic faith in the Eternal Goodness. They may have something of vast import to the future of Europe. We Americans surely have much to learn from these brethren in foreign lands.

After a long period in the Society's history when there was no effective method for strangers to inform themselves about Quaker faith and practice, there is now no reason for an interested inquirer to remain aloof. Groups of "Friends of the Friends"—a wider Quaker fellowship—have been formed in many communities. Such groups meet for silent worship, read Quaker literature, adopt the Quaker way of life and contribute to Quaker works. They live in a sort of ante-room of the Quaker Meetings, and frequently end by taking full membership in the

Society. When they are in substantial agreement with the fundamental principles of Quakerism, they are welcomed with open arms. The ideal Quaker community of the future will consist of those who are familiar from birth with the best traditions and methods of the past inspired by the zeal and enthusiasm of the neophytes who come to join hands with them. In order to facilitate the happy fusion of these two essential elements in a revived Society, the American Friends Service Committee now embraces the American Fellowship Council whose activities in turn foster new and united Meetings, the wider Quaker Fellowship, intervisitation by traveling Friends, publications and the American Young Friends Fellowship. The A.F.S.C. also has sections devoted to Social-Industrial Relations, Foreign Service, Peace, Civilian Public Service, Clothing and Prison Visitation. There is thus available a well organized service at home and abroad, open to all Friends and to those who share their principles.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Information and literature concerning the work of the Committee may be secured through the following present A.F.S.C. offices:

20 South 12 St., Philadelphia 7, Pa.

19 S. Wells St., Chicago 6, Ill.

426 N. Raymond Ave., Pasadena 6, Calif.

1830 Sutter St., San Francisco 15, Calif.

3959—15 Ave., N.E., Seattle 5, Wash.



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